

Thesis on  
GROUP PSYCHOLOGY IN ITS BEARING  
ON HOMILETICS

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## PREFACE

"In this state of uncertainty in which a young, almost indeed an embryo, science finds itself, one should be chary of attempting to apply its findings practically. There is now a serious danger that psychology will fall into discredit, partly owing to the zeal of its votaries for the unconscious and infantile aspects of the mind, but still more owing to premature attempts to utilize its supposed discoveries practically while the basis upon which they rest is uncertain and insecure."--W. H. R. Rivers.

Dr. Rivers made these observations in beginning a practical application of psychology to politics, in view of his having accepted an invitation to become a candidate for the representation of the University of London in the House of Commons. Although that was twelve years ago, and in that period no little progress has been made in the field of social psychology, the attempt which has been made in this essay to apply practically to preaching the findings of social psychology has led to a deeper appreciation of the significance of Dr. Rivers' judgments than I was capable of when this study was begun. Nevertheless, perhaps the most valuable correctives that psychology can receive in its theoretical development will come from the attempts which are made to apply it practically.

This essay is presented as a work in the field of homiletics. It might be described, otherwise than by the title it bears, as an introduction to homiletics approached

from the standpoint of social psychology.

Although it is recognized that the distinction between general, or individual, psychology and social psychology is not clear, it has been my purpose to keep the scope of this study within the field of social psychology, leaving out of consideration much valuable material in the field of general psychology which has bearings on homiletics. Moreover, its scope does not include any more of the field of social psychology than that which pertains to the religious audience situation. Nor have I undertaken to discuss all the subjects usually dealt with in a thorough text-book on homiletics, but rather to discuss only those subjects on which the group, or social, psychology of the religious audience has some direct bearing.

Accordingly, the task has been conceived to be one of surveying carefully representative works in both the field of social psychology and that of homiletics; of making a critical exposition of the principles of social psychology which are especially significant to the religious audience situation; and of indicating the bearing of those principles on the technique of preparing and delivering sermons.

At first, the plan was to divide the work into two parts, the first being an exposition of the psychology of the religious audience, and the second being a practical application to homiletics of the psychological principles expounded in the first part. An effort to follow this plan, however,

revealed certain difficulties of organization which made it seem advisable to follow the plan of indicating the practical applications in their more natural context, and it is my hope that in following this plan, the work is more unified and the significance of the applications more apparent.

The work was undertaken with the thought in mind that possibly such a study might yield some conclusions which would prove to be the bases for the modification of some of the generally accepted principles of homiletics, or even for the advancement of some new principle, or principles. No such results have been accomplished. Rather, the conclusion might be stated negatively that I have found nothing in the study of the religious audience from the standpoint of social psychology which suggests any radically novel changes in the technique of preparing and delivering sermons. What the masters of the pulpit in days gone by have learned by trial-and-error methods and written down in their text-books and lectures as inductive generalizations based on broad experience and careful observation will, for the most part, stand up in the face of the most searching criticism.

Thus to state the conclusion negatively, however, is not to imply that social psychology has no contribution to make to homiletics. Comprehensively stated, it has at least two valuable contributions to make. First, it reveals more clearly the mental processes according to which men react to social stimuli, and it thus builds up, as it were, a foundation struc-

ture to lend support and reason to some of the time-honoured principles of preaching which formerly had to be accepted more or less on authority, and applied without perhaps an adequate appreciation of the processes by which they worked. In other words, social psychology is to homiletics what most of the sciences are to the arts most closely related to them. Secondly, social psychology suggests certain emphases in preaching which need to be given more consideration than might be given on the basis of only the empirical generalizations of homiletical authorities of the past. That is to say, there are certain social factors in operation in contemporary life which somewhat modify the reactions of people to techniques of preaching which, under other social conditions, were quite effective, and they indicate certain emphases which need to be made in preaching, if the minister is to be "all things to all men".

With regard to mechanical details, although more familiar with American spelling, I have endeavoured to employ British spelling, using as my authority A Modern Dictionary of the English Language, second edition, published by Macmillan and Company, London, 1911. The bibliography has been classified, the authors in each classification being arranged alphabetically. All works referred to in the footnotes are of the edition indicated by the date in the bibliography. Books listed in the bibliography, but not quoted or specifically referred to in the thesis, are those which have been found most helpful in giving a general background for the study, or in furnishing

a basis for critical judgment in the selection and presentation of material.

I wish to express my thanks to my advisors, Professor W. P. Paterson and Principal T. Hywell Hughes, for their helpful counsel; to the Board of Directors of the Louisville Presbyterian Seminary for granting me leave of absence from that institution in order that this study might be completed; to my colleague, Dean Lewis J. Sherrill, for many stimulating conversations and constructive suggestions; and to Mrs. Warner L. Hall for reading the manuscript.

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"Our fathers felt that sermons had best be theological. The present generation of preachers feels that sermons had best be logical--especially as a defence mechanism against emotion. To them a good sermon is like a legal brief: it must come out on all fours. The truth probably is that sermons should not be theological, nor logical, but psychological. To be sure, these three are not necessarily exclusive. All that is required is that people shall receive intelligent insight spiritually from our preaching."--Joseph Fort Newton.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO HOMILETICS.

Until very recent years, homiletics did not occupy a very important place in the curricula of most theological institutions. Despite the recognized facts that the preparation and delivery of sermons occupied a major part of the time of a minister, and that his qualification to serve in the ministry was, to a considerable degree, determined by his skill in preaching effective sermons, the proportionate amount of time devoted to the training of theological students in the art of preaching was very small. There were few institutions in which one professor devoted his full time to work in the field of homiletics. As often as not, homiletics, pastoral work, the conduct of public worship, and church administration were all grouped in one course of study called "practical theology". The ability to preach effectively was spoken of as a "gift", and while it was admitted that the "gift" could be somewhat improved by means of academic training, not much attention, comparatively, was given to such training. It seemed almost to be assumed that a man either had the "gift" or he did not have it. If he had it, development would come in the course of time by its "exercise". If he had it not, nothing could be done about it.

In his Sprunt lectures on preaching, Dr. James Black gives expression to a similar judgment when he says:

"But generally . . . a young man, when 'finished', is sent out to a luckless congregation with everything in the art of speech to learn, generally by crude experiment on a long-suffering people. I am afraid the fault lies with our College curriculum. We do not treat the training in the art of speech with sufficient respect and courtesy. . . . A stray hour now and then . . . is not enough for a class of speech-training."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the training which was given was, for the most part, determined in its character and emphases by the principles of exegesis, logic, and rhetoric. Preaching, like education, was predominantly material-centred. The Bible and systematic theology were the major sources of the material of preaching, although contemporary experience, general history, and "secular" literature were freely drawn upon for illustrative material with which to make clear, vivid, or convincing, the doctrines of the Bible and of systematic theology. The primary concern was, however, that justice should be done to the subject, or to the text, rather than to the audience. And the extent to which such justice was done was measured largely in terms of the rules of exegesis, logic, and rhetoric.

It must be recognized, of course, that to a considerable extent the rules of exegesis, logic, and rhetoric are generalizations which have regard for the mental functions of man. They have not been formulated in an arbitrary

<sup>1</sup> The Mystery of Preaching, p. 40.

manner without any regard for practical psychology. Especially in the field of rhetoric, it must be acknowledged that the better works have given no little attention to the careful consideration of the ways in which men react to verbal stimuli, whether written or oral. And the extent to which some of the older authors, in their empirical generalizations, have anticipated the most recent conclusions of experimental psychology is amazing. This is particularly true of Aristotle, as the following example, selected from a number of similar ones, shows.

Jersild has made an experimental analysis of the effect of different techniques used in public speaking, before ten groups totaling about 250 individuals. He delivered carefully memorized material which he could vary systematically a number of times in the presentation. The variables whose effect was studied were spaced repetitions, initial position, verbal comments to direct attention (such as "Now get this", or "Did you notice that?"), short pause, recency, raising the voice, banging the table, and gestures of other kinds. In testing the retention of the material immediately after the presentation, he simply computed the total out of a possible 70 statements which were retained, and studied them in relation to the several factors indicated above. His data show that even such absurd devices as the use of the expression, "Now get this", were by no means unimportant.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Murphy and Murphy, Experimental Social Psychology, pp. 676-677.

Jersild's conclusions were anticipated, however, by Aristotle, who, in discussing attention, says:

"For the art of exciting attention is one that belongs equally to all parts of a speech, if it is needed, and perhaps especially to the other parts; for people are apt to become inattentive at any other part rather than at the beginning. . . . Hence, whenever there is occasion, it is proper to employ such phrases as 'Pray give me your attention. It concerns you every whit as much as myself', or 'A strange thing, such as never you have heard, I'll tell you', or 'A thing so marvellous'. This is like Prodicus's rule, whenever his audience was drowsy, 'of slipping in a taste of the Fifty Drachm speech'."<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, one cannot gloss over the fact that Demosthenes and Cicero were great orators, and Jerome Savonarola and John Bunyan were great preachers, without the benefits of twentieth century psychology. But such considerations in no way justify the conclusion that oratory is merely a "gift", that speakers are born, not made. As early a writer on homiletics as John Chrysostom has contended quite vigorously that "speaking is not a natural, but an acquired power".<sup>2</sup> Nor do such considerations invalidate the contention that speaking should be audience-centred, rather than material-centred, and that in the preparation and delivery of sermons the rules of logic and rhetoric should be employed or modified in light of the best psychological knowledge accessible to-day.

If a text is to be used in preaching, the soundest

<sup>1</sup> Rhetoric of Aristotle, Tr. by Welldon, pp. 280-281. Italics mine.

<sup>2</sup> On the Priesthood, Tr. by Marsh, p. 165.

principles of exegesis should be employed in order to ascertain its meaning. If reasoning is involved in the thought processes of the sermon, it should abide by the rules of logic. And, as a species of rhetoric,<sup>1</sup> homiletics can ill afford to disregard the principles of oratory which have been tested by time and have been found to be sound. But even so, there is still room for homiletics to apply to the task of preaching the findings of contemporary psychology.

In recent years, a number of valuable works have been published on pastoral psychology,<sup>2</sup> and in view of the intimate relations between the minister's work as pastor and as preacher, such works should be very helpful to him. And since President Walter Dill Scott published The Psychology of Public Speaking, many works in that field have emphasized the psychological approach to the subject.<sup>3</sup> But apparently very little work has been done specifically on the psychology of preaching. E. Parry has written a little book on Sermon Psychology, but in it he has not gone very thoroughly into the subject either from the standpoint of homiletics or psychology. Recent Psychology and Evangelistic Preaching, by W. L. Northridge, is a helpful brief study of that subject from the standpoint of psychoanalysis. And while Mr. William Macpher-

1 Kidder protests against this statement of the relation between rhetoric and homiletics. Treatise on Homiletics, p. 20. But the position of Vinet, Christlieb, and others seems to be more sound.

2 Stolz, Pastoral Psychology; Mackenzie, Souls in the Making; Weatherhead, Psychology in the Service of the Soul; Worcester and McComb, Body, Mind, and Spirit; Miller, The New Psychology and the Preacher, for example.

3 O'Neill and Weaver, The Elements of Speech; Williamson, Speaking in Public; Phelps, Speaking in Public, for example.



son's Psychology of Persuasion is a general work, there is much sound material in it which is readily applied to preaching. But the one major work on homiletics from a psychological standpoint is Professor Gardner's Psychology and Preaching, a book which for several years has been used in some American theological seminaries as a text-book for courses in homiletics from a psychological standpoint.

Both Scott and Gardner take some notice of the audience as a group, and give some attention to the distinctly social factors in human behaviour. But for the most part, it is valid to say that the books which have approached public speaking in general, or preaching in particular, from an avowed psychological standpoint, have treated man primarily as an individual, and only incidentally as a social being in a social situation. Yet the audience situation is pre-eminently a social situation. Hence, while preaching seeks to influence the individual as such, it must do so by means of a social situation. It seems obvious, therefore, that the approach to the task from the standpoint of individual, or general, psychology should at least be supplemented by an approach from the standpoint of social psychology.

It has become proverbial that "the proper study of mankind is man". And, while certain groups of modern psychologists have proceeded on the assumption that the proper study of mankind is rats and cats, most psychology has proceeded on the basis of the proverb. That is, the effort has been made

to study individuals as such, and then, since society is composed of individuals, to interpret society in terms of the individual.

Much has undoubtedly been learned by such a procedure, and psychology is greatly indebted even to those who have based many of their conclusions with regard to the reactions of man largely on the study of the reactions of the lower animals. But, while that is so, the isolated individual is, in reality, a fiction. All that makes him an individual is the product of his reactions to society. That there are psychologically significant differences in human beings at birth which play a part in determining the product of their reactions to society is not denied. But there is very little ground for supposing that the child of even the most intelligent and cultured parents, if kept isolated from human society from birth, would ever develop the characteristics by which we distinguish an individual person. On the other hand, individual characteristics are explicable on the basis of the interaction of society and the individual.

It seems reasonable, therefore, to contend that the proverb should also be considered in its converse form. The proper study of man is mankind. Even when one individual is speaking to only one other individual, the reaction of that second individual can hardly be predicted and controlled on the basis of a knowledge of the psychology of the individual in isolation from his social relations. And when one

is speaking to a whole group of individuals, the significance of social relationships is greatly increased. If the group is suddenly transformed into a psychological crowd, the reactions of the individual to the stimuli presented to him in the crowd may be entirely different from his reactions to the same stimuli when presented apart from the crowd. And what is true of the individual in a psychological crowd is also true of him in human groups which would not be considered psychological crowds, though not to the same degree.

Since the preacher delivers his sermons, not to isolated individuals, but to groups, it is desirable that in the preparation and delivery of sermons he should know and apply the principles of group psychology. L. L. Bernard has said of the function of social psychology that it is "to tell us how we can control the behaviour of individuals in the group or in any social situation, and how the individual can control the behaviour of the group."<sup>1</sup> In connection with our study, however, it should be noted that the preacher is concerned, not merely with knowing how he can control the behaviour of the individuals in the group, but also how he can control them so that the result will be developing Christian personality. In other words, while the preacher is concerned with the technique by which an individual may be influenced to become a member of the church, for example, that objective alone, when accomplished by certain techniques of control, may even defeat the more fundamental objective

1 Introduction to Social Psychology, p. 45.

of cultivating a Christian personality in the individual. This fact presents one of the most serious objections which can be made to the work of certain evangelists of the "Billy" Sunday type. Their objective seems to be to get as many people as possible, at the close of the sermon, to "hit the sawdust trail" and come forward to shake hands with the evangelist, thereby signifying that they "accept Christ as their Saviour". That objective is often achieved on a very large scale by such evangelists. Their technique, however, requires critical evaluation from the standpoint of homiletics, for it is by no means certain that, in the case of a large proportion of the individuals involved in "mass conversion", the action taken under such circumstances is likely to contribute to the more fundamental objective of developing Christian personality. The Christian homilete is interested, not in control by any method, but in control by methods which are productive of Christian character.

In the succeeding chapters, then, we shall endeavour to discover such methods of control and to indicate their bearing on homiletical theory and practice. In the beginning, we have to make a psychological analysis of the typical religious audience, which is the material for our study, and to identify such a group in terms of the classifications of certain recognized authorities on social psychology. Then we shall consider the foundations of social behaviour, following with detailed discussions of the social processes of sug-

gestion, imitation, sympathy, and group thinking.

Thus far, we shall be following that form of the proverb: "The proper study of mankind is man", but man as a social being in a social situation. In the last two chapters, we shall follow the converse form of the proverb: "The proper study of man is mankind"; that is, we shall consider the group, rather than the individual, as a unit.

Throughout the discussion, there will be before us the question: "Of what significance to Christian preaching are these principles and processes of social psychology?"

We have indicated already the scarcity of the literature which deals directly with our problem. Of the literature in the two major fields involved--social psychology and homiletics--however, there is such a vast amount that the chief problem has been one of weighing and selecting. The classified bibliography, together with the references in the footnotes, affords an adequate indication of the judgments we have made in the selection of material.

"There are a hundred other things along this line that can be helpfully taught and learned. There is, for instance, some knowledge of the psychology of an audience. It is not enough to know how to treat our subject, if we do not know how to treat our people. As I have listened to great speakers, distinctive speakers, it is not only how they handle their subjects that marks them off from others, but how they handle their audience and themselves."--James Black.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE RELIGIOUS AUDIENCE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF GROUP PSYCHOLOGY.

In order that the type of group with which this paper is dealing primarily may be clearly identified, so as to set the scope of the treatment within the field of social psychology, and to the end that the further course of development of the subject may be indicated, it is desirable at this point to present an analytical picture of the group to be studied, to locate that group in relation to the classifications of certain recognized authorities in the field of social psychology, and to distinguish between the group and the psychological crowd.

#### Descriptive Analysis of a Typical Religious Audience.

The group to be studied may be designated, in brief, as a typical religious audience. While the number of people may have some bearing on the psychological aspects of such an audience, it does not appear to be of sufficient significance to warrant the arbitrary designation of any number as the typical size. Accordingly, the audience may be thought of as composed of almost any number of people who could be thought of as a group, whether it be ten or ten thousand, so long as they are within hearing, and preferably also within sight, of the speaker.

Such a typical religious audience contains certain common audience elements which ought to be recognized. It is,

for example, an aggregation of various types of people. There are young people with the various dominant interests which have been found to prevail in most individuals at the different stages in the development of personality between early childhood and maturity. There are the younger adults, many of whom are just embarking upon such enterprises as marriage, home-making, parenthood, a profession, or a business venture. There are middle-aged people, some of whom have developed a multiplicity of interests and have found life, on the whole, decidedly satisfying, others whose lives have been decidedly warped by a seemingly unmerited number of disappointing experiences, and still others who seem to be unenthusiastically contented to plod along on a level plane of monotonous routine. There are old people, some of them still vigorous and interested in the things of to-day and tomorrow, others wistfully recalling "the good old days" and seeking in memory to find an escape from the loneliness and perplexity of the evening-time of life. There are both sexes, and among them are the married, the unmarried, and the widowed. There are many degrees of culture represented. There may be representatives of more than one race or nationality. Some in the audience may have a rural and agricultural background. Others will have established urban and industrial attitudes and habits. Various kinds and degrees of formal education may be manifest, from the illiterate to those possessing the highest degrees of the foremost universities. In short, the typical religious audience is quite heterogeneous (in the broader sense of that term) in its



membership. Thus, while in some particular religious audience enough may be found in common among its members to justify the consideration of it as being homogeneous in several respects, this heterogeneity must be recognized in a psychological study of the kind of group which is the subject of this paper.

Moreover, account must be taken of the fact that the individuals composing this group are, for the time being, in a particular kind of localized social context. Normally, in an audience, there is a relatively strong sense of group isolation. This sense of group isolation is perhaps at a minimum in the case of an out-of-doors audience on a street or in a park. In that case, there may be a fringe of the audience in which the individual feels himself to be no more identified with the audience than with the passing throng, or with some smaller group which happens to be within hearing of the speaker. But much more often, of course, the audience is in a hall or auditorium, physically inclosed as a group and conscious of its temporary isolation. Furthermore, the members of the audience are usually seated in a fairly uniform position, so that there is a strong tendency towards a uniform direction of attention. And it is evident that this sense of group isolation and this uniformity of position tend to insure in most of the members of the audience a constant awareness of at least a two-fold localized social relationship. The first is the relationship between the individual member of the audience and the speaker. Presumably, in becoming a part of the audience this relationship has been anticipated. And his physical position is such that, both in seeing and in hearing, he is made very much aware

of his social relationship as a listener to the speaker. Along with this listener-speaker relationship is also the awareness of a second social relationship--that between the individual and the other members of the audience. Sometimes, if the testimony of individuals about their own experience in such a matter can be trusted, the first of these relationships occupies the whole field of consciousness, so that the presence, attitudes, and actions of the other members of the audience are not a part of the individual's awareness.<sup>1</sup> But that is a comparatively rare circumstance. More often each individual is quite conscious of a relationship between himself and other members of the audience. And, as we shall see later, this fact is of considerable importance to the reactions of an individual in an audience situation.

But not only are the members of an audience in this two-fold localized social relationship. It must also be remembered that they are in an inseparable larger social context. That is to say, they sustain certain family relationships as husbands, wives, parents, or children. There are vocational

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Morton Prince, in a lecture on the conservation in memory of forgotten experiences of normal life, relates a number of cases in which, both under experimental conditions and under accidental circumstances, experiences of either visual or auditory stimuli, of which the subjects were not consciously aware at the time of the experience, and which the subjects could not recall voluntarily under normal circumstances, were reproduced in memory by means of automatic writing or hypnotism. (The Unconscious, pp. 52-56.) If such details as Dr. Prince describes are subconsciously perceived and conserved, even though they may not permit of normal recall, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that, to some extent, such perceptions may influence the members of an audience who are consciously aware of only one of the two social relationships indicated above.

relationships as employers, employé's, customers, clients, or competitors. There are recreational relationships as teammates, rivals, or companions. There are relationships as citizens, such as that of tax-payer, voter, candidate, or officeholder. Thus is indicated briefly some of the complex labyrinth of relationships which constitute the larger social context in which the member of an audience should be viewed. And, while it is not to be supposed that all these relationships are a part of the individual's consciousness as a member of an audience during any considerable period of time, neither do we get an adequate picture of the audience if such relationships are excluded from consideration, or ignored.

But in addition to those common audience elements, there are certain distinctly religious elements which are included in the picture of a typical religious audience. On the basis of their relation to a church, the members of a religious audience may be grouped in one or another of three classes. First, there are the members of the local congregation, who are also, of course, members of a particular sect or denomination. Secondly, there are members of other local congregations of the same, or of a different, denomination, and in the same, or in different, communities. And thirdly, it is probable that there are some who are members of no church or religious body at all.

Moreover, there are many varieties within these classes. Some are relatively mature, while others are relatively immature, not only in their ages, but also in their religious training and experience. Professor W. P. Paterson has aptly

described three of these varieties as "the human being as such, to whom religion has been something, the convert, to whom it has been much, and the saint, to whom it has been everything".<sup>1</sup> Between those who have "kept these things" from their youth up and those who are relative strangers to the beliefs and practices of any religion are all degrees of religious maturity. And in addition to varieties in religious maturity, there are also the more and the less institutionalized members of the church. Some will be very familiar with the history, and strongly convinced of the distinctive doctrines of a particular denomination. From time to time, they will have been members of the various church courts. They will possess detailed knowledge about, and intense enthusiasm for, the history, organization, and program of the denomination as a whole. On the other hand, there will be those who can scarcely pronounce the name of their denomination, and who know practically nothing about its distinctive characteristics. And a similar situation will exist with respect to the local congregation. There will be those who belong to practically every organization within the congregation--the Sunday School, the choir, the Young People's Society, an official board, the men's brotherhood or the women's auxiliary, holding offices or committee assignments, it may be, in several of them, and attending most of the services or meetings held in the church over a long period of years. At the other extreme will be those "occasional church members" who have little knowledge of, or interest in, the program and organ-

1 Paterson, W. P., The Nature of Religion, pp. 37-38.

ization of the local congregation, but who attend a morning service of worship now and then. Besides these varieties among the members of the religious audience who may be classified as church members, there will be found among those who are members of no church whatever those who are in varying degrees hostile, indifferent, or sympathetic in their attitude towards religion.

This, then, in broad outline, is a picture of the group the psychology of which we are seeking to discover, in order that application may be made of its bearing on the preparation and delivery of sermons. We must now ask: What kind of group is such a religious audience from the standpoint of social psychology?

#### Classification of Such an Audience From the Standpoint of Social Psychology.

With regard to this question one is inclined to agree heartily with Professor William McDougall that "it seems impossible to discover any single principle of classification".<sup>1</sup> However, the classifications of two recognized authorities in the field of social psychology, with somewhat different points of view, will prove helpful in orienting the religious audience as a social group.

The first is that of Professor L. L. Bernard, who presents a two-fold classification: direct contact groups and indirect contact groups. In the first class the members of the group are in a "face-to-face" situation, while in the second they are not, and "stimuli come to them from the common source only

<sup>1</sup> The Group Mind, p. 122.

by means of carriers, such as newspapers, telegraph, radio, and the like".<sup>1</sup> Direct contact groups are then listed in the general order of the decreasing ratio of their permanency and of the rationality of their behaviour, as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- A. Relatively rational types:
  - 1. Genetic groups (primary groups in simplest form):
    - a. The family.
    - b. The neighbourhood proper.
    - c. The play group.
  - 2. Clubs and other purposive associations:
    - a. Service clubs.
    - b. Labour unions.
    - c. Religious societies.
    - d. Political parties.
    - e. Teams.
  - 3. Deliberative assemblies.
  - 4. Discussion groups and classes for instruction.
  - 5. Audiences.
- B. Relatively non-rational types:
  - 1. Informal clubs, social sets, etc.
  - 2. Ceremonials.
  - 3. Rallies and demonstrations.
  - 4. Involuntary crowds.
  - 5. Mobs.

In connection with this classification it should be noted that, while deliberative assemblies are classified as third among the relatively rational groups, in his description of deliberative assemblies Dr. Bernard says, "The highest degree of rationality of organization in direct contact groups is to be found in the deliberative assembly".<sup>3</sup> This latter position is certainly what one would expect as a judgment of the relative rationality of the deliberative assembly, and very probably this ambiguity is due to the attempt to classify groups in the decreasing ratio of their permanency and of the

<sup>1</sup> Bernard, L. L., Introduction to Social Psychology, Chapter XXVIII, p. 438.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Chapters XXVIII and XXIX.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 442

rationality of their behaviour. In other words, it is the supposed greater permanency of genetic groups and such purposive associations as clubs, labour unions, and the like, which has led Dr. Bernard to place them higher in the scale than deliberative assemblies.

Also it should be noted that the group which has been described in broad outline in this paper is at once, as a general rule, both an audience and a religious society, or a subdivision of a religious society. Thus, when a particular religious audience is relatively unorganized, impermanent, and heterogeneous in its constituent factors (as in the case of street preaching), it falls under some low sub-division of the fifth of Bernard's relatively rational types. On the other hand, when a particular religious audience is highly organized, and relatively permanent and homogeneous in its constitution (as in the case of an old congregation of a single denomination, and composed largely of cultured and spiritually mature members), it rises very much higher in Bernard's table--surely as high as religious societies.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in terms of this classification, we are dealing with a direct contact group which falls

1 This judgment seems to be in general accord also with Professor James Drever's classification on the basis of the mental levels which are normal to the group: (1) Those at the perceptual level--the "crowd type", having a "here-and-now consciousness"; (2) Those at the ideational level--the "club type", having some common aim, sentiment, or ideal; and (3) Those at the rational level--the "community type", having continuity of mental life and the possibility of common purposes and ends of a very comprehensive and complex character. The higher types of social groups are said to come into existence under four conditions: (a) Continuity of existence, (b) A measure of group self-consciousness, (c) Interaction with other groups, and (d) Group organization. An Introduction to the Psychology of Education, pp. 213-217.

among the relatively permanent and relatively rational types. In its lowest extreme form, as a normal group,<sup>1</sup> it borders on the relatively non-rational type. In its higher forms, it rises to a position very near the top of this classification of social groups. It will serve our purpose for the time being, however, to think of the typical religious audience as being at some mid-point between these two extremes.

Another classification of social groups which is of value in orienting the religious audience is that of McDougall, who deliberately omits "such fortuitous and ephemeral groups" as persons seated in one compartment on a railway journey and the passengers on a ship, and presents the following:<sup>2</sup>

A. Natural groups:

1. Those rooted in kinship, as the family.
2. Those determined by geographical conditions, as an island population.

B. Artificial groups:

1. Purposive--groups brought together primarily by the existence of a common purpose in the minds of all their members.
  - a. Social clubs.
  - b. Commercial companies.
  - c. Associations for furthering public ends.
2. Traditional--groups in which traditions are predominant, such as
  - a. Hindu castes.
  - b. Free Masons.
3. Mixed--groups in which there is a high degree of mixture both of the traditional and of the purposive, such as
  - a. Christian church.
  - b. Ancient universities and colleges.

This classification is obviously more suggestive than exact. The author of it, for example, frankly admits that it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a purely traditional group. It directs attention, however, to two characteristics

<sup>1</sup> The significance of this qualification is made clear in the latter part of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The Group Mind, pp. 123-124.



of the religious audience not indicated in Bernard's classification. The first is that it is an artificial social group. Of more significance, however, is the second--that it is a mixture both of the traditional and of the purposive.

Thus, without entering upon a lengthy critical discussion of these classifications as such, we may identify the typical religious audience, from the point of view of social psychology, as an artificial, direct contact group, which is relatively rational and permanent, and which is a mixture both of the traditional and the purposive.

There are times, however,--usually in the more intense forms of religious revivals--when the religious audience does not fit into this classification. An excellent example in point is the Cane Ridge camp-meeting of August, 1801, in Bourbon County, Kentucky. G. B. Cutten presents a vivid description of this meeting as follows:

"Especially at night, with the camp-fires blazing around the auditorium cut out of the dense woods, the breeze echoing back the shrieks and other noises from the impenetrable forest, and several men preaching at different parts of the grounds at the same time, the effects were greatly increased. Large numbers fell and would lie breathless and motionless for hours, or would shriek or groan at intervals. As many as one in every six present at some meetings fell. At times these were carried to the meeting-house and laid down so that the floor was nearly covered. Some were motionless, 'some talked but could not move. Some beat the floor with their heels. Some, shrieking in agony, bounded about like a live fish out of water. Many lay down and rolled over and over for hours at a time. Others rushed wildly over the stumps and benches, and then plunged, shouting, 'Lost! Lost!' into the forest'. It was a common sight to see men leap, sob, shout, laugh, or swoon, and when a meeting seemed dull, one attack would immediately increase the spirituality. The 'jerks' seized saint and sinner alike, it was no respecter of persons. Those affected shook, twitched,

jumped like frogs, or bounded like fish, and the scoffer was as likely to be stricken as the convert. These reflex movements first appeared, but when the cerebral hemispheres became involved, then unconsciousness was the result. Then the 'barkers' were seen. Groups of men and women, on all fours, snarling, and growling, and snapping their teeth, barked at the foot of a tree. This they called 'treeing the devil'. The 'holy laugh' became a part of the worship; both in chorus and in series the congregation burst out into loud and uncontrollable laughter. All kinds of preachers and exhorters developed; in one instance a little girl of seven years was allowed to preach until she was so exhausted that she could not utter another word."<sup>1</sup>

Such behaviour clearly indicates that this particular religious audience belongs elsewhere than where we have classified the typical religious audience. It would fit much better down near the bottom of the non-rational groups of Bernard's classification, in company with mobs and crowds.

This fact gives rise to the need for distinguishing, if possible, between the "group" and the "crowd". By some writers in the field of social psychology no such distinction is clearly made, though some difference appears to be assumed. By others some distinction is made, but is not adhered to consistently. The result is much confusion. Sir Martin Conway, for example, includes the mob, a public meeting, a theatre audience, a congregation, the race, the empire, the nation, the county, the city or town, a political party, a class, a profession, an ecclesiastical body, a club or society, an educational organization such as a university or college, a regiment of soldiers, and other aggregations of people within the category of crowds.<sup>2</sup> The nearest that he comes to a descrip-

<sup>1</sup> Psychological Phenomena of Christianity, pp. 180-181.

<sup>2</sup> The Crowd in Peace and War, pp. 4-6.

tion of the crowd which distinguishes it from other groups is when he says that "a multitude of people walking in the street, each about his own business, may form a dense mass of humanity, but they are not a crowd until something occurs to arrest their common attention and inspire in them a common emotion".<sup>1</sup> Although much of his book deals with real psychological crowds, the work suffers considerably from the inclusiveness of his use of the term crowd.

No attempt is made by W. Trotter<sup>2</sup> to define the crowd, since he is concerned primarily with exhibiting the significance of the gregarious instinct in social behaviour generally.

Professor Bernard does not define the crowd, but he is careful throughout his book not to confuse the crowd with more rational types of groups.<sup>3</sup>

Professor William McDougall<sup>4</sup>, likewise, does not undertake a concise definition, but in an admirable treatment of the subject, he presents the conditions under which a crowd is formed, gives a detailed description of the intellectual and emotional characteristics of the crowd, and is then consistently careful in his use of the term.

Dr. E. D. Martin indicates briefly his conception of the crowd as follows: "In this discussion the word 'crowd' must be understood to mean the peculiar mental condition which sometimes occurs when people think and act together, either immediately, where the members of the group are present and in

1 The Crowd in Peace and War, p. 8.

2 Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War.

3 Introduction to Social Psychology, pp. 458-463.

4 The Group Mind, Chapter II.

close contact, or remotely, as when they affect one another in a certain way through the medium of an organization, a party or sect, the press, etc."<sup>1</sup> This "peculiar mental condition" is later described as "a phenomenon which should best be classed with dreams, delusions, and the various forms of automatic behaviour....The crowd-self...is analogous in many respects to 'compulsion neurosis', 'somnambulism', or 'paranoiac episode'."<sup>2</sup>

G. Le Bon identifies the crowd as follows: "Under certain given circumstances, and only under those circumstances, an agglomeration of men presents new characteristics very different from those of the individuals composing it. The sentiments and ideas of all the persons in the gathering take one and the same direction, and their conscious personality vanishes. A collective mind is formed, doubtless transitory, but presenting very clearly defined characteristics. The gathering has thus become what, in the absence of a better expression, I will call an organized crowd, or, if the term is considered preferable, a psychological crowd."<sup>3</sup> But before Le Bon's work is finished he has applied the term crowd to the masses in general and to various social classes and vocational groups which should not be considered psychological crowds at all.

With these definitions and descriptions before us, it at least seems evident that in the true psychological crowd one is dealing with an abnormal phenomenon of social behaviour. And just as there is a distinction in general psychology between

<sup>1</sup> The Behaviour of Crowds, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> The Crowd, p. 26.

"normal psychology" and "abnormal psychology", so it appears that there ought to be a similar distinction between "normal social psychology" and "abnormal social psychology". At any rate, it is with this conviction that the following definitions are proposed as a working basis on which to distinguish, in this paper, between the group and the crowd.

A group is an aggregation of individuals whose behaviour is organized around a common interest, whether the interest and organization be permanent or temporary, and whether the reactions of the individuals be similar or different. When such a group is in a face-to-face situation, as in an audience, it may be termed a direct contact group. When it is not in a face-to-face situation, but is nevertheless responding at approximately the same time to the same, or very similar stimuli, it may be termed an indirect contact group. Examples of such a group would be the readers of one newspaper, or the listeners-in of one wireless program.

A crowd is a direct contact group in an abnormal mental condition, in which the behaviour of the group displays a lack of rational inhibitions in a degree which is similar to that displayed by the individual in a hypnotic state. Crowd psychology in relation to the religious audience will be considered more fully in a later chapter.

Thus far we have described analytically what has been conceived to be a typical religious audience. That audience has been oriented in terms of certain recognized classifications of social groups. Furthermore, it has been distinguish-

ed from the psychological crowd as being a normal group, although it is recognized that the religious audience, like almost any normal group, may, under appropriate conditions, become a psychological crowd. It is in view of that fact, among others, that a chapter is given to the psychology of revivalism.

#### Application to Preaching.

Probably the most significant bearing on homiletics of such an analysis of the religious audience as we have made in this chapter is also the most obvious one--that in the selection and treatment of subjects the psychological character of the particular audience should be a governing factor.

This has been recognized by writers on rhetoric and homiletics from very early times. It seems clearly to be implied, for example, by Aristotle, when he says, "There are three kinds of Rhetoric, corresponding to the three kinds of audience to which speeches are naturally addressed. For a speech is composed of three elements, viz. the speaker, the subject of the speech, and the persons addressed; and the end, or object, of the speech is determined by the last, viz. by the audience."<sup>1</sup> Professor Van Oosterzee devotes a whole chapter to the elaboration of the thesis that "the truly Biblical and Christian sermon first attains its end, when its subject-matter is in harmony not only with the general wants of the congregation, but also with its particular wants, yea even--

<sup>1</sup> The Rhetoric of Aristotle, Trans. by Wellldon, p. 22.

so far as possible--with the momentary wants of that congregation for which it is specially designed and delivered."<sup>1</sup>

And Dr. James Black, in his Sprunt Lectures on Preaching, speaks of the sense of the audience as "the most regulative thing in the sermon".<sup>2</sup>

But simply to say that the psychological character of the audience should be a governing factor in the choice and treatment of subjects is to say what is not, in itself, of very much practical help to the preacher. A more thoughtful consideration of the psychological analysis of the religious audience, however, yields two principles which the minister may apply to his preaching.

First, the principle of variety should be observed, both within a single sermon and in the sermons that are preached over a period of time. Without violating the fundamental principle of unity in discourse, it is often possible for the preacher to direct what he says in different parts of the sermon to different groups and relationships in his audience. And for varieties of subjects and treatment there is practically no end.<sup>3</sup> But unless the minister keeps in mind the psychological characteristics of his congregation, there is the constant danger that he may fall into the habit of preaching just one type of sermon, or, what is worse, preaching sermons as if a

<sup>1</sup> Practical Theology, p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> Mystery of Preaching, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Unusually suggestive material on this subject is to be found in the following works: Coffin, H. S., What to Preach; Black, J., Op. cit., Ch. V; Stidger, W. L., Preaching Out of the Overflow, Ch. VIII; Oxnam, G. B., The Varieties of Present Day Preaching.

religious audience were an aggregation of individuals who were all exactly alike.

But variety is not the only principle to be observed in view of the psychological character of the audience. Individual and group differences must be taken account of, but underneath those differences is the common humanity of mankind--what someone has called "the man in men"--to whom the preacher may always address his sermons. This psychological aspect of the audience has been most aptly described by Professor Van Oosterzee as follows:

"There are general wants of every congregation, the same in all ages. We address men, sinners, mortals, professors of the Gospel, who come and seek in the house of the Lord....light and power, consolation and hope, for themselves in their inner and outward life. The same impure and unresting hearts beat before us in the imposing cathedral as in the lowly country chapel; everywhere and under manifold garb Pharisee and publican go up at the same time to pray. It must for this reason be our endeavour to become 'all things to all men, that we may by all means save some'."<sup>1</sup>

So that, while the heterogeneity of the religious audience may be most impressive, and while it makes its demands upon the preacher in the preparation and delivery of his sermons, of no less significance to homiletics is the essential homogeneity of mankind as such.

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 221.



"To secure these (offensive and defensive) advantages of homogeneity, it is evident that the member of the herd must possess sensitiveness to the behaviour of their fellows."

\* \* \* \* \*

"The successful shepherd thinks like his sheep, and can lead his flock only if he keeps no more than the shortest distance in advance. He must remain, in fact, recognizable as one of the flock, magnified, no doubt, louder, coarser, above all with more urgent wants and ways of expression than the common sheep, but in essence to their feeling of the same flesh with them. In the human herd the necessity of the leader bearing unmistakable marks of identification is equally essential."--W. Trotter.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE FOUNDATION OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR: GREGARIOUSNESS

Social psychology, as a science, is in a state of confusion equal to, if indeed not greater than, the confusion of general psychology. It speaks with many tongues. It builds on various foundations. Le Bon,<sup>1</sup> avowedly restricting himself to the consideration of psychological crowds, but actually including all kinds of groups and masses, builds his structure on the unconscious, together with a collective mind and a mysterious contagion. E. D. Martin<sup>2</sup> follows Le Bon in the importance assigned to the unconscious, but leaves aside contagion and the collective mind. To G. Tarde<sup>3</sup> imitation explains practically everything of importance with regard to the development of society. To W. Trotter<sup>4</sup> all collective behaviour is to be ascribed to the operation of the instinct of the herd. McDougall<sup>5</sup> speaks largely the language of instincts with their accompanying emotions. F. H. Allport,<sup>6</sup> along with others of the behaviouristic school, exalts the conditioned response. And Wheeler,<sup>7</sup> as a disciple of the Gestalt psychology, builds on social configurations and organismic laws.

It is usually dangerous to attempt to classify men of science in various schools or groups, and no such classifi-

1 The Crowd.

2 The Behaviour of Crowds.

3 Laws of Imitation, also Social Laws.

4 The Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War.

5 Social Psychology, also The Group Mind.

6 Social Psychology.

7 The Science of Psychology.

cation of contemporary men and their writings is likely to prove even approximately accurate for any great length of time, for it is an ideal of science to keep an open mind and to desert positions formerly held as soon as the development of the science seems to have shown them to be invalid. But, in spite of this danger, it is well, for the sake of perspective and to aid in critical judgment, for one who is attempting a practical application of a science to take a telescopic look at that science in its historical development before proceeding to set forth what he has made his own critical judgments as to the foundations of collective behaviour.

For this purpose, Professor Bernard's brief historical sketch of the development of social psychology may be presented in a condensed form.<sup>1</sup> He groups representative authorities in three classes.

### Three Historical Approaches to Social Psychology.

First, there are those writers who treat psycho-social phenomena objectively and in the mass. To this treatment Ross gives the name "planes and currents viewpoint". It is concerned primarily with fads, fashions, crazes, conventions, customs, traditions, mores, folkways, and the like. Its beginning may be assigned to the appearance of Walter Bagehot's Physics and Politics, in 1872. Many problems which belong to social psychology were also discussed by William Godwin, in his

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to Social Psychology, pp. 25-37. In the following three paragraphs Bernard's account has been followed, his judgment being accepted in the classification of those men on whose works this writer does not feel qualified to pass judgment.

Enquiry Concerning Political Justice. Gabriel Tarde followed a similar method in his Les Lois de l'Imitation, L'Opposition Universelle, La Logique Sociale, and Social Laws. Ross is grouped as the chief American follower of Tarde, although it is noted that he has made many departures from the positions of the French writer. In this same general group belong such other American writers as E. S. Bogardus, J. M. Baldwin, T. B. Veblen, C. A. Ellwood, W. G. Sumner, and Walter Lippmann. Among the better known European writers of the "planes and currents" type are C. Duprat, Scipio Sighele, Gustave Le Bon, and Graham Wallas. This group has rendered a valuable service in making such phenomena as custom, tradition, convention, fashions, and public opinion stand out as objective facts, but the phenomena dealt with are abstract and conceptual, and are so vast and elusive that much hasty generalization has often been made on the basis of random observations, with the result that this type of social psychology has fallen into disrepute in some quarters.

The other two types of social psychology are concerned with the same fundamental problem; namely, how character or personality is built up in the individual. The first is the instinctivist school, which contends that "character or behaviour patterns are integrated from within on the basis of native processes or instincts, which dominate the process of character building".<sup>1</sup> The history of this school goes back at least to such writers on ethics as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Price, Hume,

<sup>1</sup> Bernard, L. L., Introduction to Social Psychology, p. 25.

Adam Smith, and Kant, and to such early psychologists as Helvetius and Hartley, and the Scottish metaphysical psychologists, Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart. Most of the Utilitarians, like J. S. Mill, Spencer, and Leslie Stephen, as well as the psychologist Bain, also emphasized innate tendencies and impulses. But Professor William McDougall's Introduction to Social Psychology, published in 1908, is probably the outstanding book representing the general position of this group. W. Trotter, James Drever, R. H. Thouless, F. C. Bartlett, and Graham Wallas, the latter of whom was mentioned in connection with the first group also, are British writers of prominence in the field of social psychology who stress the importance of instincts in character development. This school has made contributions to social psychology which are of inestimable value.

The third type of social psychology may be designated as the environmentalist school. It "accounts for the integration of behaviour patterns under the influence of environmental pressures, especially of those from the psychosocial environment".<sup>1</sup> The existence of instincts, or of other inherited behaviour patterns, is not denied by some of the less radical proponents of this school, but it is denied that the process of character formation is dominated by instincts. The beginning of this school is traced to the ethicists and psychologists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "Locke, and in less degree, Hume and Helvetius prepared the

1 Ibid., p. 25.

way in the study of acquired character traits for the rather systematic treatise of Godwin previously referred to."<sup>1</sup> Adam Smith's Theory of the Moral Sentiments and William James' Great Men, Great Thoughts, and the Environment are also regarded as valuable contributions to this phase of social psychology. Among the first writers of prominence in America to work extensively in this direction were J. M. Baldwin and C. H. Cooley. Others in that country are F. H. Allport, John Dewey, G. H. Mead, W. I. Thomas, and E. D. Martin. "Wallas and Ellwood, although less characteristic of this school, should be mentioned in this connection."<sup>2</sup> The "conditioned response" occupies, in the writings of most of this school, a place of importance comparable to that occupied by "instincts", "drives", or "urges" in the writings of the instinctivist school.

Of course few, if any, of these men are so standardized in their thinking and writing that they fit accurately and wholly in some one class. Some of them might be regarded as synthetic types, and that fact has been indicated in the case of some of these writers who have been listed in connection with more than one group. And in such a synthetic group might be placed R. H. Wheeler, and other writers who have been influenced by the Gestalt psychology, and who emphasize the importance of both the environment and the insights of the individual, but embrace neither the concept of the conditioned response nor that of the instinct.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

### A Common Factor in All These Approaches.

Must one adopt the terminology and the point of view of some one of these schools as over against the others? Or, is there some common factor which, for the purpose of a study of this kind, may be regarded as the foundation of collective behaviour?

In light of the study which has been made of representative works in all these schools of social psychology, the writer is convinced that there is one underlying characteristic of man which is in evidence in some degree in practically all the social behaviour of the individual, but which is of special significance in the interpretation of human behaviour, overt or covert, in the group. That characteristic is the gregariousness of man.

Its simplest manifestation is the almost universal desire of human beings, as well as many species of the lower animals, to be in the company of others. This statement has been qualified because there are some cases of individuals who consistently seek to avoid the company of others. But that very fact has a two-fold bearing on the significance of gregariousness in social psychology. In the first place, such behaviour is generally regarded as abnormal, and that fact of itself is some indication of the widespread recognition of the importance of gregariousness, even in its simplest form. In the second place, such behaviour as represents an exception to the universality of gregariousness in its simplest form is in itself a manifestation of hyper-sensitiveness to the human, or social,

element in man's environment. The hermit is not reacting in the normal way to social stimuli, but the significant thing is that he is reacting to them, and he is doing so in such a way as to lend further emphasis to the importance of social factors in man's environment. And, as will be shown later, the scope of gregariousness, as that term is used in this paper, is much broader than that of the conception which merely includes the desire of human beings to be in the company of other human beings.

#### Gregariousness as Habit.

Gregariousness has usually been given one or the other of two classifications in psychology. By most writers of the environmentalist school it is conceived to be a habit, or a group of habits. That is to say, it is a learned, or acquired, tendency, not an innate tendency. The child is born into a group--the family. His earliest wants are satisfied by the members of this group. He quickly learns that the members of the family group are sensitive to his wants and needs. And the child, in turn, becomes very sensitive to the attitudes and actions of the other members of the family. As the child becomes older, the range of this social sensitiveness is extended to include the other groups which are commonly designated as "primary groups"--the play group, and the neighborhood group; and gradually it is further extended to the innumerable derivative groups with which he becomes associated in life. Thus are established in the life of the individual many social habits of sensitiveness to the various groups with which he comes in con-



tact--habits which, when grouped together, are included within the scope of the term gregariousness.

### Gregariousness as Instinct.

Among contemporary psychologists, Professor F. C. Bartlett has made a careful analysis of gregariousness as an instinctive tendency which is a most valuable contribution to social psychology. Starting with McDougall's description of the gregarious instinct as "a mere uneasiness in isolation, and satisfaction in being one of a herd", he calls attention to the significant fact that there are two outstanding features of gregariousness in this description, "the one negative--'a mere uneasiness in isolation'--the other positive--'satisfaction in being one of a herd'."<sup>1</sup> Both are admitted to be socially determined, but the positive feature is held to be of more significance to social psychology because it demands the actual presence of the group. Moreover, when this positive feature is more definitely characterized, it is found to be "based upon a high degree of readiness to be influenced by other members of the herd or group",<sup>2</sup> a disposition which is held to belong to the general innate tendencies, rather than to the specific instincts. Then, turning to two others of McDougall's primary instincts which assuredly must be considered to be social--the tendency to self-assertion and to self-submissiveness (for which Bartlett prefers the terms assertiveness and submissiveness), Bartlett points out the further significant fact that "readiness

<sup>1</sup> Psychology and Primitive Culture, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

to respond to social influences does not always involve the relationships of assertiveness and submissiveness".<sup>1</sup> There is also the response, one to another, of equals, which he calls "primitive comradeship", and which, in his judgment, has as much right to be considered instinctive as have assertiveness and submissiveness.

Bartlett's analysis appears to be entirely sound, and when two other innate social tendencies--that towards "selective conservation",<sup>2</sup> and "the social form of the instinct of construction"<sup>3</sup>--are added to the three already noted above, the five yield themselves readily to Dr. R. H. Thouless' grouping under the head of "Instincts belonging to the Gregarious System".<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that this is by no means held to be an exhaustive list of the gregarious tendencies, for there are socialised forms of many of the specific instincts. But these, at least, form the nucleus of the gregarious system, and their interaction with the other instinctive tendencies is of primary importance in determining the particular mode of behaviour which will be manifested in a group.

Such, in briefest outline, is the most thorough analysis of gregariousness as instinct which the writer has found.

1 Ibid., p. 36.

2 Ibid., p. 42.

3 Ibid., p. 43.

4 Social Psychology, p. 157. In fairness to Professor Bartlett's use of terms, it should be noted that he prefers to use the restricted definition of gregariousness, which he applies only to the tendency to seek company. This he carefully distinguishes from the innate social relationship tendencies which Thouless has classified under his heading: "Instincts belonging to the Gregarious System". (Cf. Bartlett's Psychology and Primitive Culture, p. 37.) This difference of terminology does not appear to affect the use of the term gregarious in this paper.

### Gregariousness as Used in This Paper.

In order to set forth clearly the broad meaning of gregariousness as it is used in this paper, a simple example may be used. The sex instinct, or drive, is admitted by all the schools of psychology to be of primary significance in the motivation of behaviour. But such behaviour may be modified and directed by the gregariousness of the individual; that is, by his sensitiveness to the presence or absence (physical or imaginative), the approval, disapproval, or other intermediate attitude, of another individual or group. For example, take the behaviour of a lover, A, in the presence of his beloved, B. The response of A, motivated primarily by the sex instinct and modified by the attitude of B and by the mores of A, would be, let us say, to embrace B. Even in that case, the attitude of B and the mores of A would constitute modifying forces which are included in the meaning of gregariousness as used in this paper. But suppose that A and B meet in a drawing room in the presence of C, the members of B's family, who look with disapproval upon the association of A and B. This attitude on the part of C is most likely to modify the response of an embrace into a formal handshake, or some other form of greeting established by social custom. This modification, too, would be attributed to gregariousness as the term is being used.

In a similar way one might go through a whole catalogue of types of instinctive behaviour and show the far-reaching influence on such behaviour of the presence or absence, and the attitude of other individuals or groups, whether ex-

pressed in person by means of gestures, spoken words, and other forms of direct communication, or whether mediated through written communication, customs, fashions, mores, folkways, and the like. This is really the factor which is dominantly significant in Tarde's concept of imitation. It is the factor which underlies most of the social significance of the "herd instinct" as interpreted by Trotter. As will be indicated in later chapters, it is often the determining factor in those mental processes called suggestion and sympathy,<sup>1</sup> which play such important roles in group life. The "complex" of psychoanalysis is usually the product of this sensitiveness of man to the attitude of others, in its relation to the operation of the sex instinct. And in the "individual psychology" of Alfred Adler, it is this same factor which operates in the individual to produce a feeling of inferiority or of superiority, which in turn moulds the personality of that individual.

Thus, if gregariousness be described simply as the innate tendency of man, and certain species of lower animals, to herd together and to find a peculiar satisfaction in such a social relationship (or uneasiness in its absence), then admittedly the interaction of other instincts with that one,

1 Cf. Thouless, R. H., Social Psychology, pp. 155-156: "The gregarious system of instincts comprises, however, not merely the innate tendency of men to live together in groups, but also all the tendencies which are called out by a social environment. The sensitiveness, for example, to other peoples' feelings, which we call sympathy, the sensitiveness to other persons' opinions, which we call suggestibility, and the readiness to follow other persons' courses of action, which we call imitation, are all social reactions....It is his possession of these peculiarly social ways of reacting that justifies us in speaking of man as a gregarious animal and in attributing to him a gregarious system of instincts."

and certain modifications of them by learning, must be thrown together in one classification in order to attain the meaning which, in this paper, is attributed to that factor which is conceived to be the foundation of group behaviour. Similarly, if habits, or conditioned responses, be assigned to the place of primary importance among the mechanisms of human behaviour, and instincts be practically disregarded, then gregariousness must be thought of as a sort of synthesis of all those habits, overt and covert, in which the sensitiveness of man to the human element in his environment is evident. Such a synthesis of habits or instincts, or of both, is the factor which is considered as the foundation of social behaviour, and which, for want of a more appropriate term, is called gregariousness.

#### Practical Bearings on Preaching.

This gregariousness of man lends itself immediately to at least three applications to the minister as a preacher. In the first place, it lends vitality to the ultimate aim of preaching which is otherwise sometimes quite vague. The objectives of the minister in his pulpit work have been variously stated in works on homiletics, but more frequently and emphatically have they been stated in terms of relationships other than that of the preacher to the congregation considered as a group. In relation to the material of preaching, the aim has been said to be that of expounding and applying the Word of God. In relation to the congregation, conceived as an aggregation of two classes of individuals--the converted

and the unconverted, the objective of the preacher has been described as a two-fold one: to convert the unconverted, and to sanctify the converted. In terms of the three aspects of mental functions--the cognitive, the affective, and the conative, the aim has been stated as a three-fold one: to make intellectually clear, emotionally vivid, and volitionally strong the meanings of the Christian gospel, so that men may be persuaded to an ever-enlarging allegiance to God in Christ. These statements of homiletical aims are surely valid and important within the limitations of the points of view from which they have been formulated, for in the last analysis the group is composed of individuals who must be dealt with as such. But the more ultimate aim of preaching, and the aim to which the psychology of the group directs especial attention, is the establishment among men of an ideal group relationship which is characterized by a fellowship that is fraternal, as between the several members of the group, and filial, as between the group and God--a group relationship which, in the New Testament, is commonly called the Kingdom of God. Whatever else the Kingdom of God may be, it certainly is a group relationship. The minister's aim in preaching involves the adding of numbers to the group, and the progressive building up of the Christian characters of those within the group, but it also looks beyond those more immediate objectives to the dynamic impact of the Christian group upon other groups, institutions, customs, and fashions among men throughout the

world. It was this objective which Dr. Charles E. Jefferson had in mind when, in his Yale lectures on preaching, he said, "The preacher's first work is the building of a brotherhood."<sup>1</sup> And, recalling our picture of the religious audience, and the larger social context from which its members are inseparable, the words of a Warrack Lecturer become something more than mere rhetoric. Having observed that the preacher must deal with individuals one by one, Dr. James Reid says,

"But we have other work to do also. It is to reach the mind of a group--large or small--and leaven it. From the pulpit we may have an opportunity of getting into touch with the thinking mind of a community. We may leaven them by the truth, raising the whole standard of their life, teaching new values. Our influence may soak in almost unconsciously--till men find themselves reading their newspapers with a different outlook--sometimes, it may be, changing their newspapers! We may find them taking a new stand in a municipal election, beginning to think in terms of people instead of rates, taking a new line about international problems, thinking differently about war, growing a conscience about how their money is made and what they are doing with it when it is made. These results are definite and direct fruits of the gospel."<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the gregariousness of man is one of the most valuable allies the preacher has in human nature to assist him in the accomplishment of the aims of preaching. Both in the theory and in the practice of preaching, the selfish and individualistic tendencies in man have been given full recognition. But not always has equally explicit recognition been given to the possibilities inherent in a dual alliance between the preacher and the gregarious tendencies in man. Much negative preaching would give way to a more ef-

<sup>1</sup> The Building of the Church, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> In Quest of Reality, p. 21.

fective positive type of preaching, if such an alliance were deliberately made and sermons constructed and delivered accordingly. This is not to deny that negative preaching has its proper place. Nor does it overlook the obvious fact that a large part of the force of negative preaching derives from the sensitiveness of the individual to the attitudes and opinions of the group. But surely here is a sound psychological basis for the preaching of sermons which accelerate and guide the operation of certain desirable tendencies in man which are peculiarly sensitive in the group situation, as well as for the preaching of sermons which are calculated to inhibit certain undesirable tendencies to which members of the congregation may be yielding.

A third bearing of gregariousness on preaching is its tendency to produce the priestly, rather than the prophetic, type of ministry, in which case the traditional elements in religion are emphasized more than the purposive elements. Dr. H. C. Miller contends that in all human affairs, but particularly in religion, "the distinction corresponding to the prophetic type and the priest type tends to manifest itself",<sup>1</sup> and continuing his picture of the contrast between the two types, he says,

"The prophet tends to be an auto-suggestionist, while the priest is generally a hetero-suggestionist....The prophet suggests to himself the adequacy of his new vision; the priest accepts the suggestion of his environment that the existing order cannot be improved on....."

1 The New Psychology and the Preacher, p. 93.



The priest abides by a loyalty that may be of outstanding nobility; the prophet accepts a dynamic that loyalties cannot confine. To the priest his creed is sanctified by its past; to the prophet his vision is guaranteed by its spontaneity. The priest consciously or unconsciously is a pragmatist; he condemns the new idea because he has no evidence that it will work; to the prophet pragmatic values do not exist. The priest is concerned to maintain the identification between himself and his herd--present and past; but the prophet is the servant of posterity--its verdict alone carries weight with him; what if his contemporaries slay him--they cannot exterminate his message."<sup>1</sup>

Along with this contrast by Dr. Miller may be placed the remarkable statement (one is inclined to say "confession") of a world-famous minister to Dr. A. J. Gossip, who, as a very young minister, asked his famous and successful companion whether he could tell Dr. Gossip the secret of successful preaching.

"Certainly I can!" he answered. "The whole art of successful preaching lies in this. Be careful to tell people only what they know already; or rather", and he put the tip of the forefinger of one hand almost at the very end of the nail of the forefinger of the other, "or rather that, and just this much more. But", added he, shifting the finger an infinitesimal bit, "if you go as far as that ahead of them, you lose them to a certainty."<sup>2</sup>

This incident clearly reveals the extreme to which a minister may go in his gregariousness. Because of his sensitiveness to the opinions and the praises of the group, he never really attains the position of a leader of the group; he is merely the spokesman of the group, echoing in his sermons the generally accepted beliefs and the time-honoured cus-

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., pp. 94-96.

<sup>2</sup> In Christ's Stead, pp. 118-119.

toms which make for stability, standardization, and possibly stagnation.

"Recognized systems of belief accepted by all the members of the social group in which an individual lives tend to be accepted without criticism by that individual."  
--R. H. Thouless.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SUGGESTION IN THE RELIGIOUS AUDIENCE.

Suggestion occupies a place of sufficient prominence in most descriptions of group phenomena, as well as of individual behaviour in non-group situations, that even if one rejected the conception as having no bearing on group psychology, the reasons for such rejection would need to be set forth. By the New Nancy School, for example, suggestion is represented as the master key which unlocks the door to the secret of most human conduct. On the other hand, suggestion is rejected by a sufficient number of psychologists as being a concept which is of little or no value in the interpretation of group phenomena, that one is hardly justified in assuming that its place in group psychology is absolutely secure. Moreover, there is little uniformity in the usage of the term. It therefore calls for careful examination and critical evaluation in this study.

#### Definitions of Suggestion.

Definitions of suggestion differ chiefly in three respects. They differ, first, in the emphasis placed upon the immediate origin of the suggestion--whether within the mind of the one in whom the suggestion operates, or without. This difference of emphasis leads M. Coue, for example, to say, "Suggestion does not actually exist by itself. It does not exist, and cannot exist, except on the distinct condition, sine qua non, that it transforms itself in the other person's mind into autosuggestion: and this word we define as 'implanting an idea

in one's self through one's self'." <sup>1</sup> A second difference is in the extent to which the definitions include a particular theory of the mechanism by which suggestion operates. But the difference which is of most significance to this paper is the extent to which definitions distinguish, or fail to distinguish, between suggestion, imitation, and sympathy. Thouless, for example, deliberately broadens the scope of his definition of suggestion to include feelings, states, or courses of action, in addition to propositions. <sup>2</sup> McDougall, on the other hand, restricts the scope of suggestion to "a process of communication resulting in the acceptance with conviction of the communicated proposition in the absence of logically adequate grounds for its acceptance". <sup>3</sup>

It must be granted that the "realization of a communicated proposition" may manifest itself in the form either of a belief not immediately acted upon, or of a feeling, or of an immediate course of action, or of all three. And it may very well be, as many authorities contend, that the mechanism by which suggestion, imitation, and sympathy operate is fundamentally the same. But it seems desirable, for the sake of analysis, to distinguish as far as possible between the spread, in a group, of beliefs, emotions, and overt actions, even though it is very improbable that in actual behaviour they are really separated one from another. This distinction will be made by the use of the respective terms "suggestion", "imitation", and "sympathy". McDougall's definition of suggestion, given above,

1 Self Mastery Through Conscious Autosuggestion, p. 21.

2 Introduction to the Psychology of Religion, p. 19.

3 Social Psychology, p. 97.

is therefore the one which will be used in this paper.

Although suggestibility is one of the outstanding characteristics of the psychological crowd, it is by no means peculiar to the crowd, or even to the group. The individual, apart from the actual group situation, is also suggestible. But it has been found that there are individual differences in the degree of suggestibility, and also differences in the same individual under various conditions. Some of these conditions of suggestibility have been carefully worked out by experiments, and there is fairly general agreement as to the interpretation of the results.

#### Internal Conditions of Suggestibility.

For convenience, the conditions of suggestibility may be listed as internal and external. The principal internal conditions are seven, as follows: (1) Abnormal states of the brain, such as the relative dissociation in hypnosis, hysteria, normal sleep, intoxication, and fatigue. This condition was considered of such significance to Dr. Boris Sidis that he expressed as a general law of suggestibility that "suggestibility varies as the amount of disaggregation, and inversely as the unification of consciousness".<sup>1</sup> (2) Attention may be regarded as a sine qua non of suggestibility. C. Baudouin presents as the first of his laws of suggestion the "Law of Concentrated Attention: The idea which tends to realize itself is always an idea on which spontaneous attention is concentrated, or an idea which has been forced on the attention after

<sup>1</sup> Psychology of Suggestion, p. 90.

the manner of an obsession".<sup>1</sup> (3) Attitude. It is difficult to find a single word or phrase which adequately summarizes those attitudes which are conducive to suggestibility, for the appropriate attitude varies somewhat with the nature of the suggestion made. For example, an attitude of self-abasement renders the individual susceptible to direct suggestion, while an attitude of self-esteem renders the individual susceptible, not to direct suggestion, but to indirect suggestion. Again, an attitude of aversion toward an object renders the individual suggestible towards ideas which are in harmony with that aversion. This is clearly evident in the readiness with which people will believe the most absurd gossip about a person who is disliked by them. And once a general attitude of aversion or hatred has been created in a nation which is at war, or on the verge of war, almost any statement, however unreasonable, which reflects on the despised nation, is accepted as very truth. In a political campaign, one of the most deadly weapons which may be used against a candidate for office is the suggestion that his election will serve to advance the cause of some organization or movement towards which there is a strong aversion among the voters. Such a weapon was used effectively against Mr. Alfred E. Smith, a Roman Catholic candidate for President of the United States in 1928. Many anti-Catholic voters were led to believe that if he were elected, the Pope would straightway move the Vatican from Rome to Washington, D. C. But on the other hand, suggestions which

<sup>1</sup> Suggestion and Autosuggestion, p. 114.

are in harmony with a prevailing attitude of friendliness, admiration, or esteem, are accepted with equal readiness. With such examples before us to indicate the relation between particular attitudes and particular suggestions, it will suffice to say that, in general, attitudes of expectancy, of unfulfilled desires, and of readiness to cooperate with the agent of the suggestion are favourable conditions of suggestibility.

(4) Temperament. In general, people of a sanguine temperament are more suggestible than those of the phlegmatic type. This fact may have some bearing on the relative suggestibility of various races, or of various organizations which, either by the very nature of the organization, or by chance, are composed of individuals who are more or less of the same temperament.

(5) Habit. Depending upon their relation to the suggested idea, habits may increase or decrease suggestibility, as in the case of attitudes. Bernard states the relation more technically as follows: "The positive condition is ... the existence of a strongly conditioned association between stimuli and response mechanisms. The negative internal condition is the absence of any conflicting or inhibiting psychic processes or competing stimulus-response mechanisms."<sup>1</sup> Although he objects to the use of the term suggestion, Professor H. A. Overstreet devotes an illuminating chapter in one of his books<sup>2</sup> to an exposition of the ways in which groups may be influenced by suggestions which are in harmony with dominant habit-systems among those groups. (6) Emotional excitement. Baudouin states

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> Influencing Human Behaviour, Chap. XII.



this condition in the form of a law which he calls the "Law of Auxiliary Emotion: When, for one reason or another, an idea is enveloped in a powerful emotion, there is more likelihood that this idea will be suggestively realized".<sup>1</sup> The importance of this condition is most evident in the case of hallucinations. (7) Deficiency in knowledge related to the topic in regard to which the suggestion is made, or imperfect organization of one's knowledge. It is this condition which largely accounts for the increased suggestibility of children as compared with adults. It has also been contended by many psychologists that there is a difference of suggestibility between the sexes, women being more suggestible than men. Doubtless this is the psychological foundation of the contemptuous generalization frequently made in cynical writings or conversation, that the church is an organization which appeals primarily to women, children, and effeminate men. However, there is some ground for questioning, first, whether the quantitative difference in suggestibility between the sexes is as great as has been alleged, and secondly, whether the difference that does exist should be ascribed to sex itself, or to the different mental attitudes and habits which are primarily the product of the divergent functions performed by men and women in the social scheme of things. Conclusive experimental evidence on the question we have not discovered, but experiments conducted by W. Brown are reported, and the results interpreted, by Murphy and Murphy as follows:

1 Op. cit., p. 114.



"Sex differences exist, if by this statement one means that after massing all the data together, suggestibility scores are more apt to be high in women than in men. Out of the 26 tests, 13 reveal a clear difference, and in twelve of these thirteen cases the average woman is more suggestible than the average man. In three other tests there are slight but fairly reliable differences, the women again being more suggestible. Qualitative consideration of this statement is, however, probably more to the point. Women are more suggestible in tests involving imagined sensation, in the series of progressive changes, in the distortion of memory, and in the estimation of magnitudes. Tests with illusions give no clear difference, while tests on aesthetic judgments give contradictory or indecisive results. 'Wherever written directions are used which give rise to false anticipations, or which contain statements concerning the usual course of most persons, these directions will prove more misleading to women students than to men'.<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing in these experiments to indicate clearly that differences in suggestibility between the sexes are to be ascribed to sex itself. Rather, it seems more likely that any differences which do exist are due to differences in habit, training, amount and organization of knowledge. In connection with deficiency of knowledge as a condition of suggestibility, it should also be noted that when such deficiency is reduced to the level of feeble-mindedness, the suggestibility of the individual is restricted largely to very simple ideas which are "in line with their fundamental drives".<sup>2</sup>

#### External Conditions of Suggestibility.

The principal external conditions of suggestibility are four: (1) Restriction of voluntary movements. Sidis lists this as an important condition even in the case of an operator working with subjects under laboratory conditions.<sup>3</sup> In general,

1 Op. cit., p. 160.

2 Bernard, L. L., Op. cit., p. 306.

3 Op. cit.. n. 47.

such a condition is conducive to suggestibility in that it helps to prevent the distraction of attention and the dissipation of energy in directions other than that of the suggestion.

(2) Monotony and rhythm. This is part of the usual technique in inducing a state of hypnotism, and seems to help bring about a condition of temporary dissociation of the psychic processes which is favourable to suggestion. (3) Repetition. It is this condition which Professor Knight Dunlap has in mind in the statement of the first rule for propagandists: "If you have an idea to put over, keep presenting it incessantly. Keep talking (or printing) systematically and persistently."<sup>1</sup> This rule is observed in the use of slogans in political campaigns and in commercial advertisements. (4) Prestige. Decidedly the most important of all the external conditions of suggestibility is the prestige of the source, or agent, from which the suggestion-stimulus comes. In the audience situation, it may be described as a condition of rapport between the speaker and the audience. The speaker may possess the natural prestige of a strong, magnetic personality, or the acquired prestige of reputation, title, wealth, uniform, authority, achievement, or position. Not infrequently, of course, he possesses both natural and acquired prestige. Murphy and Murphy report a number of experiments by Aveling, Hargreaves, and Estabrooks in which the factor of prestige in suggestibility has been isolated and its prime significance undoubtedly established.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Social Psychology, p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., pp. 145-155.

### Kinds of Suggestion.

The kinds of suggestion may be classified either on the basis of the source of the suggestion-stimulus or on the basis of the form of the suggestion-stimulus in its relation to the suggestion-response. On the first basis we may distinguish between auto-suggestion, in which the stimulus is presented by the individual to himself, and hetero-suggestion, in which the stimulus is presented by some person, or other agent, without the individual subject. As was indicated in the beginning of this chapter, M. Coue contends that there is really no suggestion except auto-suggestion. But in view of the scarcity of absolute originality, and in light of man's dependence on language, or other social symbols, for ideas, quite as plausible a case might be made out for the position that there is no suggestion except hetero-suggestion. Such an argument, however, would be quibbling to no purpose. The distinction between auto-suggestion and hetero-suggestion is simply a useful means of indicating whether the immediate origin of the suggestion-stimulus is within the subject or without.

On the basis of the form of the suggestion-stimulus in relation to the suggestion-response, suggestion may be said to be either direct or indirect. In direct suggestion the idea to be realized is clearly indicated, as in a declarative statement, or a command; whereas, in indirect suggestion the idea to be realized is only hinted at, or left to be inferred. The minister may be successful in the use of direct suggestion

when the conditions of suggestibility are favourable to an unusual degree, but normally his most useful technique is the more difficult and more artful one of indirect suggestion.

#### Conditions Favourable to Suggestibility in the Religious Audience.

At this point it is pertinent to consider to what extent the conditions existing in a religious audience are favourable to suggestibility. Among the most important is the prestige of the leader, since he is the agent of most of the suggestion-stimuli presented to the audience. And of course this prestige will vary with different leaders and different audiences. In churches generally known to have high educational standards for the ministry, the preacher acquires a certain amount of prestige just by virtue of the fact that he has satisfied those educational requirements. In the more authoritative of the churches, the minister's prestige is relatively greater because he is an authorized spokesman of that organization. If he holds, or has held, certain high offices in the courts of the church, the minister's prestige is thereby increased to a degree which is sometimes amazing. If by the writing of books, or by other means, he has established a reputation for thorough scholarship, that reputation gives him acquired prestige. In his pastoral contacts with his people, in the deference and recognition given him by non-ecclesiastical organizations, in the higher honorary or academic degrees which may be conferred upon him, and even in some athletic prowess which he may possess, the minister achieves a degree of prestige which renders his audience rel-

atively more suggestible. So that, while there are certain conditions existing in most religious audiences to-day which greatly reduce the prestige of the ministry, as will be indicated presently, relatively the minister, as the leader of the religious audience, possesses considerable prestige, and to that extent his religious audience may be considered generally to be the more suggestible.

A second condition favourable to suggestibility in the religious audience situation is the general deficiency in knowledge pertaining to religion and ethics, or else poor organization of that knowledge--or both. Of course, this condition, again, will vary greatly. Those members of the religious audience who have received considerable religious training in the home, the public schools, and the Sunday School will have a greater amount of such knowledge, and in all probability it will be better organized and integrated with knowledge in other fields than will be the case with those members who have not had such training. It is probably this fact which is largely responsible for the judgment that religious audiences in Scotland are more critical and less suggestible than are such audiences in America, where there is practically no religious training in the public schools and state universities, and where only a small proportion of the children are reached by the Sunday Schools.

Moreover, in contrast with the give and take of a discussion group situation, the leader of a religious audience has a virtual monopoly on the attention of the group--or at

least he has a favourable opportunity to acquire such a monopoly. The people are usually seated, not in a haphazard way, but uniformly, so that they can see and hear the leader. He, in turn, is usually on a raised platform, and in a position most effectively to gain and hold the attention of the audience. Quietness on their part is obligatory. Interruptions, such as the heckling frequently encountered by a political speaker, are not permitted. Questions which may arise in the minds of the thoughtful must go unasked until after the service is over. There are few bodily movements on the part of the audience, except as they are directed by the leader, and then they serve rather to unify and direct attention than to divert it. Moreover, for the most part, the audience has come voluntarily for the specific purpose, among others, of hearing what the minister has to say in his sermon. In other words, the audience is predisposed to give its attention, and distractions are reduced to a minimum, so that, insofar as attention is a condition of suggestibility, it is present in the religious audience to a very high degree.

Attitudes favourable to suggestibility are created, or certainly may be created, by the skilful use of the rhythm and the emotion-stirring qualities of the music, as well as by the ideas expressed in the words of the psalms or hymns which are sung. The symbols used in the ritual, such physical symbols as carved or moulded crosses, pictures, and the like; the architecture of the building, the colours in stained glass windows, and the artificial lighting--all may be so employed as to create attitudes which are conducive to suggestibility.

Professor R. H. Thouless has aptly summarized the extent to which conditions favourable to suggestibility are present in the religious audience situation, as follows:

"Suggestion clearly plays a very large part in religious teaching. I am convinced too that the unintended production of the hypnoidal state is present in religious services to a much greater extent than is ordinarily recognized by writers on the psychology of religion. Let us consider the various methods of increasing suggestibility and see how far they are found in religion. The prestige of the preacher is increased by the wearing of distinctive clothes. The suggestibility of the hearer is increased by finding himself one of a crowd.<sup>1</sup> This effect is heightened in such a service as that of the Salvation Army by the ejaculations with which the congregation show their sympathy with what is being said by the preacher. The following things may be present which are liable to induce the hypnoidal state: a monotonous voice in the reading of the service, the rhythmical sound of the music, and the points of light produced by lighted candles. I do not wish to be so far misunderstood as to be supposed to mean that these things are deliberately introduced into services in order to induce the hypnoidal state. But that is their tendency in fact, and it is possible that it is to this tendency that they owe their value as adjuncts to the religious service."<sup>2</sup>

#### Conditions Unfavourable to Suggestibility in the Religious Audience.

However, it is well also to note that there are present in the religious audience certain conditions which are unfavourable to suggestibility. There are at least four such conditions which exist quite generally, and which are especially significant for the religious audience of the times in which we are now living.

<sup>1</sup> The term "crowd" is not here used in the restricted sense in which we are using it, but if the word "group" were substituted, the point would remain of the same significance.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to the Psychology of Religion, p. 24.



The first is the more universal education of the masses. With tax-supported schools which are accessible both in the urban centres of population and in the rural districts, and with laws which, on the one hand, prohibit child labor, and on the other, make attendance at school compulsory, illiteracy is decreasing rapidly. An idea of the broadening scope of public education in America, for example, is presented in the report of President Hoover's research committee on social trends.

"In 1900 there were 284,683 students in American universities, colleges, and teacher training institutions. In 1930, although the population of the country had increased only 62 percent, the attendance on institutions of higher education had increased to 1,178,318, that is, by 314 percent. In 1900 there were 630,048 pupils in secondary schools. The number of such pupils in 1930 was 4,740,580. In 1930 one of every seven persons of college age was in college and one of every two persons of secondary school age was in secondary school."<sup>1</sup>

And the scope of the curricula of both types of institutions has been broadened while the number of students was increasing. In 1900 the number of subjects of instruction offered in public secondary schools was 18. In 1928 that number had increased to 47.<sup>2</sup> A corresponding extension of the scope of curricula has taken place also in the colleges and universities. The following examples are chosen at random from a table showing the extension in ten independent colleges and the liberal arts colleges of ten representative universities in the United States:<sup>3</sup>

1 Recent Social Trends in the United States, p. 329.

2 Ibid., p. 330.

3 Ibid., p. 338.

Institution	Courses in 1900	Courses in 1930
Amherst College	44	130
Colorado College	127	420
Oberlin College	195	369
Harvard University	543	1114
University of Chicago	960	1897
University of Wisconsin	434	1143

Such an increase in the number of people receiving formal education, together with the increase in number of subjects in the curricula of educational institutions, surely means that a larger percent of the population has a wider range of knowledge than was the case thirty years ago. And, what is perhaps even more significant, improvements in the methods of teaching have been very definitely in a direction which is best calculated to develop in students a more critical, scientific attitude than that which was the product of older memoriter methods of teaching and learning--an attitude which seems almost certain to decrease in some measure the degree of general suggestibility.

A second condition is the widespread free discussion of religious and moral issues in books, magazines, newspapers, public forums, and over the wireless. The members of a religious audience are no longer isolated as a group and statically homogeneous in their beliefs and opinions. Increased facilities of communication have made the world smaller and the neighbourhood larger. In increasing numbers, ideas, habits, customs, beliefs, and mores have crossed the border lines of various groups. The result has been a comparison of differ-

ences, a weighing of values, and a raising of questions which are not left at home when the individual attends a religious service. Rather, they become effective inhibitions to suggestion-stimuli, and are a significant part of a true psychological picture of a religious audience.

Still another condition which tends to reduce the suggestibility of the audience to which the minister usually speaks is the critical attitude towards the authority of both the Bible and the Church which is increasingly prevalent today. In former times, ideas or beliefs presented to religious audiences with the obvious sanction of the Church or the Bible, or both, were likely to be accepted by most of the members of the audience quite uncritically. The "text" of the sermon was assumed to be the Word of God. The preacher's task was simply to explain and apply the meaning of the text. Its truth was taken for granted--at least by those who were good church members, and church members nearly always compose a large majority of a religious audience. But in more recent years, the methods and results of the higher criticism of the Bible have been disseminated through the universities, books, magazines, and newspapers, until they have even reached the mythical man in the street. Through these and other facilities of communication he has learned that there is a widely-accepted doctrine of evolution which somewhat modifies Biblical anthropology. He has read, if nowhere else than in a magazine supplement to the Sunday newspaper, some of the modern psychological explanations of human conduct, and if they do not seem

to be in accord with the traditionally interpreted teachings of the Bible and the Church, so much the worse for the Bible and the Church. In other words, what is accepted to-day by the majority of people as a pronouncement of science comes to many with a prestige of authority which was formerly possessed by the pronouncements of the Church or of the Bible. These observations are borne out by the statistical analysis of trends in attitudes towards religion and science as they are reflected in books and magazines published during the past thirty years in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The result is a much more critical attitude towards the doctrines of the Church and the teachings of the Bible, which means, in terms of psychology, that the members of a religious audience are much less suggestible with respect to sermons than they were in former times.

A fourth condition is the change of theory and practice in the field of religious education. In a very general way, it may be described as a change from the transmissive theory to the creative theory, together with the altered techniques implied in the change. Under the former theory there existed a body of "saving knowledge". The individual possessed a mind which was conceived functionally to be a sort of tabula rasa upon which this knowledge might be impressed, or it was thought of as a jug into which this knowledge might be poured little at a time. In any case, the function of the teacher was that of transmitting this body of knowledge to

1 Ibid., pp. 397-414; 441; 1010-1014. For testimony that a similar trend has been observed in Great Britain, see Drawbridge, C. L., Open Air Meetings, pp. 35-37.

the rising generation. The method used was of the essence of suggestion, and it tended to continue conditions of suggestibility. In more recent times, however, the focus of the curriculum of religious education has been shifted from materials as a centre to the pupil as a centre. The method is not so often that of memoriter recitation, but rather of free and critical discussion. The "lesson" may begin with a life situation involving certain choices. These choices are analysed, discussed, and evaluated under the guidance of the teacher as a group leader. The religious precepts, experiences, and dogmas of the past may be examined in the process, to be sure, but only as a means to the individual's discovery of knowledge in experience. Professor T. G. Soares has stated the aim and method of religious education as follows: "Religious education has for its aim the development of persons devoted to the highest social well-being, which they identify as the will of God; religious education has for its method the progressive direction of youth toward the development of skill in deliberative determination of conduct with reference to its social consequences."<sup>1</sup> A similar emphasis is evident in Professor G. A. Coe's definition of Christian education as "the systematic, critical examination and reconstruction of relations between persons, guided by Jesus' assumption that persons are of infinite worth, and by the hypothesis of the existence of God, the Great Valuer of Persons."<sup>2</sup> The point of significance for this paper in both these statements is the emphasis of modern

<sup>1</sup> Religious Education, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> What is Christian Education?, p. 296.

religious education on the attitude of critical investigation, of weighing values, and of deliberating upon alternative choices. Of course, it must be frankly recognized that modern theories of religious education, with their accompanying techniques, have hardly had time to be put into use on a sufficiently widespread basis as to have modified already, to any great extent, the conditions of suggestibility of religious audiences. But they seem certain to do so progressively in the future, and they therefore furnish a cue to a contemporary trend, at least, which is worth noting in its bearing on the suggestibility of the religious audience. They warrant the warning that the minister of to-day who assumes that the young people of his congregation are ready to accept uncritically whatever religious teachings he may choose to present to them from the pulpit, is in danger of finding himself among those who are wondering why the church is losing its hold upon the young people.

Since we are now dealing with a normal group, we may omit, for the time being, a consideration of the extent to which a degree of mental dissociation approaching a state of hypnosis may exist in the religious audience. That will be considered in a later chapter from the point of view of abnormal group psychology. But with that omission, the most significant of the conditions of suggestibility which may exist in the religious audience are the prestige of the leader and an attitude of uncritical submissiveness on the part of the audience. Perhaps these are not really two separate con-

ditions, but only the objective and subjective aspects of one condition, which might be described as a condition of suggestibility rapport between the audience and the leader. Yet when the four conditions listed above as being unfavourable to suggestibility are considered, it becomes evident that their combined effect is focussed at just that point. They tend to decrease the prestige of the minister as the leader and agent of suggestion, or they tend to increase the critical attitude of the audience, or both. This conclusion is valid only as a very general one, and will doubtless have some notable exceptions, but it seems unquestionably to be indicative of a contemporary social trend which is of some concern to the minister as a preacher.

#### The Bearing on Homiletics.

What use, then, shall the minister make of suggestion in his preaching? It is a mental process which is sometimes employed with little ethical discrimination in commercial advertising. Governments use the technique of mass suggestion to arouse and maintain the fighting morale of armies and civilian populations during wars, frequently deceiving the people with shameful falsehoods. Various organizations use it to disseminate propaganda of every conceivable kind. It is associated with demagogues in their leadership of mobs in socially destructive activities. These, and other uses and associations of suggestion, tend to lead one to the conclusion that suggestion should have no place whatever in the

art of preaching the sacred truths of religion.

But the question is not so easily answered as that. For one reason, whether the minister wills it or not, to some degree the process of suggestion is operative in the religious audience during the preaching of a sermon. That is to say, inevitably some ideas are going to be accepted and realized uncritically by some members of the group. Wittingly or unwittingly, in the very nature of the case, the minister becomes the agent of suggestion-stimuli.

Moreover, for such to be the case does not necessarily imply anything that is abnormal. As was indicated earlier in this chapter, there are some abnormal conditions under which suggestibility is heightened in the individual. But because suggestion sometimes occurs under abnormal conditions, it is not therefore necessary to assume that suggestion always implies the abnormal. Whenever any presentation harmonizes positively with the consciousness of the individual, or even when the relation is one of negative agreement, it is the normal and natural thing for that presentation to be accepted without any process that might be called critical.<sup>1</sup> It simply fails to raise any questions, or to conflict with any tendencies in the organism which are strong enough to stimulate criticism.

Again, while by definition a suggestion-stimulus is accepted uncritically at a given time, the agent of the sug-

1 Cf. Gardner, C. S., Psychology and Preaching, pp. 138-139.



gestion, or the situation or condition giving rise to it, may have been considered critically beforehand, so that the factor of prestige (which we have seen to be so often the determining factor in suggestion, especially in the speech situation) has been considered critically. A child, for example, may accept uncritically a statement made to him by his parent. But the very attitude in the child which, in this case, is a primary condition of suggestibility, has been built up by a critical process which amply justifies the child in his confidence in the general trustworthiness of the parent. This attitude has become habitual, and the critical consideration of each separate "proposition", or statement, made by the parent would be absurd. Now, surely such a process as we have described is quite a normal one. And, looked at in its larger setting, it could hardly be said to be entirely a non-rational process. Yet, when viewed in the immediate circumstances, it measures up to all the requirements of the definition of suggestion.

There is a close parallel between the minister in his preaching relation to a congregation and that parent in relation to the child. The minister, over a period of time, wins a large part of his prestige with the congregation by proving himself to be trustworthy in his relations with them. There may be some respects in which the prestige he acquires is spurious and misleading to those to whom he ministers. But especially in protestant bodies is it true that probably the

members of the normal religious audience are very little more suggestible in relation to the minister as a specialist than are patients to their physician, or students to their professor. In other words, within certain limits, suggestion has its proper functions in many relationships of life, and it is unreasonable to assume, as does Professor Lumley, in his book on The Menace of Propaganda, that the minister has no moral right whatever to employ the technique of suggestion in his preaching. On this subject, we agree quite heartily with Professor Thouless when he writes:

"A good deal of nonsense is talked by people who seem to think that it is a reproach peculiar to the teaching of religion that it is very largely a non-rational process--suggestion under conditions of heightened suggestibility. That is true of most teaching. Even in rational demonstration, it seems probable that the conviction with which a proposition is received owes a great deal to suggestion over and above the influence of the perceived rigidity of the proof. Perhaps the conditions of teaching furthest removed from these of the pulpit are to be found in the university class-room, where one wishes to train the students to think for themselves, and the lecturer endeavours not to present conclusions but to state alternatives and to give due weight to facts on both sides. But even here, it will be found that so far as he is communicating his opinions to his class, he is using suggestion. He is not generally engaged in proving his opinions, but in affirming them in a confident tone. If he thinks that the class will have difficulty in accepting what he says, he does not multiply proofs; he affirms it again in a more confident tone."<sup>1</sup>

We may summarize briefly the bearing of suggestion on homiletics, then, as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to the Psychology of Religion, pp. 25-26.

First, it is highly desirable that the minister shall have some understanding of the process of suggestion, so that he may be in a position to recognize, and in some degree control, the conditions of suggestibility, distinguishing between that which is normal and that which is abnormal.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, in view of the more critical attitude towards religion which we find to prevail to-day, especially among certain groups, it is necessary that the minister in preaching to such groups depend less on the technique of dogmatic affirmation and frequent repetition--the fundamental technique of direct suggestion, and more on the technique of indirect suggestion.

Thirdly, since some degree of suggestibility is normal and almost inevitable in the religious audience situation, it behoves the preacher to recognize the tremendous responsibility that is his as a teacher of religion. As Dr. Thouless has put it, "The more a teacher depends on suggestion, and the less he utilises the reasoning power of his followers, the graver is his moral responsibility for seeing that what he teaches is true".<sup>2</sup> Not a little of the religious faith of many of his congregation is so related to their confidence in his sincerity, his scholarship, his careful weighing of values, and his general integrity of character, that for him to shatter that confidence is not only for him

1 The dangers of abnormal suggestibility are indicated in the chapter on the abnormal religious audience.

2 Introduction to the Psychology of Religion, p.26.

to impair his own effectiveness as an agent of religious suggestion-stimuli, but also, in many cases, to render people contra-suggestible to religious ideas in general.<sup>1</sup> When used with ethical discretion, normal suggestion may be used by the minister as a means of planting religious beliefs and of building moral and religious sentiments and ideals which are of inestimable value. Or, in the hands of a Rasputin, suggestion may be used to wreck character and overthrow the organization of a whole social structure. It may be dynamite or leaven--depending upon the minister who uses it.

<sup>1</sup> This point is made in some form or another in most textbooks on homiletics. Cf., for example, Van Oosterzee, Practical Theology, pp. 41-44; Broadus, Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, pp. 5-6; Christlieb, Homiletic, pp. 131-134; Vinet, Homiletics, pp. 203-208; Brooks, Lectures on Preaching, pp. 35-71. However, we have not seen it specifically related to the function of the minister as a chief agent of suggestion, which seems to be the most reasonable interpretation.

"Language, which symbolizes the accumulated achievements of civilization, is the chief instrument of vicarious personality development through projective imitation and consequently the chief aid to social progress."--L. L. Bernard.

## CHAPTER V.

### IMITATION IN THE RELIGIOUS AUDIENCE

Probably there is no concept in social psychology to which more varied meanings are attached, and to which more various degrees of importance are assigned, than to the concept of imitation. By most of the earlier social psychologists of the "planes and currents" school it was given a very inclusive meaning and was exalted to a place of foremost importance in the explanation of the interactions of individuals in the group. In the judgment of Gabriel Tarde, "the career of imitations is, on the whole, the only thing which is of interest to history".<sup>1</sup> He even went so far as to define society as "a group of beings who are apt to imitate one another, or who, without actual imitation, are alike in their possession of common traits which are ancient copies of the same model".<sup>2</sup> In the importance attached to imitation, Tarde was followed, to a great extent, by J. M. Baldwin, E. A. Ross, and others. At the other extreme are some writers of the behaviouristic school who feel that social psychology might almost dispense with the term entirely. Between these extremes, however, are many authorities who, while differing somewhat in their definitions of the term, nevertheless maintain that imitation is a useful concept for the designation and description of certain interactions within the group. It is that value which is attributed to it in this

<sup>1</sup> Laws of Imitation, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

paper, and since there is no general uniformity of meaning, a more or less arbitrary definition must be given the term.

#### Definition of Imitation.

Accordingly, we may define imitation as the mental process by which the actions of one person, or group of persons, are copied by another. The actions copied may be actually perceptible at the time of the copying, or they may be only imaginatively perceptible.

Imitation has been considered by some psychologists to be a specific instinct. By most psychologists to-day who make use of the term at all, however, it is not so regarded. The chief grounds for rejecting the instinctive theory of imitation have been summarized by Professor McDougall as follows: "(1) the very high generality of the object or situation which must be assumed to evoke such an instinctive impulse; (2) the extreme diversity of its alleged manifestations; (3) the absence of any clear evidence of such an instinct in animals; (4) the possibility of explaining all outwardly imitative behaviour in other ways.<sup>1</sup> Murphy and Murphy have reported some experiments of M. Guernsey and C. W. Valentine which seem to indicate some specific forms of imitation in very young children, but it is the judgment of the authors that these experiments require confirmation, and even then the results might very well be explained by other means than that of imitation as an instinct.<sup>2</sup> But the fact of imitation, as it

<sup>1</sup> Outline of Psychology, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Experimental Social Psychology, pp. 266-267.

has been defined above, remains a fact which can be observed in the affairs of every day life. With McDougall and Drever it may be regarded as an innate general tendency; or, with Allport and Bernard it may be regarded as the name of a system of habits; but in either case the concept is a useful and valid one for the description of a significant aspect of group behaviour.

#### Kinds of Imitation.

Imitation may be of either of two general kinds.

The first is involuntary, or unconscious, imitation. D. Starch has made a laboratory study of unconscious imitation in handwriting. One hundred and six subjects were asked to give samples of their handwriting in their usual manner, copying phrases from models submitted to them. One of the models was typewritten, the other three were written with varying degrees of slant and width of letter. Very few of the subjects had any idea as to the purpose of the experiment. Starch found that of the 103 subjects who stated that they had written in their usual manner, every single one had, as a matter of fact, adapted his handwriting to conform in some degree to the model. Most of them showed this tendency to conformity in changing the slant of their writing to make it like that of the model; and those who did not show it in the slant showed it in the change in the width of letters. Some showed it in both.<sup>1</sup>

Unconscious imitation is of unusual social significance because it is so indiscriminating. Some time ago the

<sup>1</sup> Murphy and Murphy, Op. cit., p. 178.



writer observed at lunch that a six-year-old daughter was flinging her mop of bobbed red hair from side to side periodically during the meal. Inquiry revealed that she had been playing all morning with an older child who had this nervous habit, which the younger child obviously had acquired by unconscious imitation. An illustration of the same kind of imitation, but one of more significance for this paper, comes from our student days in the theological seminary. The professor who taught homiletics was an unusually dramatic and popular preacher, and seminary students availed themselves of every opportunity to hear him preach. He had two characteristic mannerisms of delivery which were quite noticeable, but which harmonized with his personality to such an extent that they did not mar the effectiveness of his preaching. At some time in his sermon, he would spread his feet far apart, rock his body from side to side, in a pendulum motion, a few times, and then bring his heels together with a military click, like a private soldier drawing to attention in the presence of an officer. At other times, apparently he would be groping for a word, and in the interval of the pause, he would pucker his lips and stick them out, somewhat as if he were about to begin whistling. And our class had not been long in the seminary, when in a sermon delivered before the whole class one of the students was observed imitating with astonishing exactness these two unusual mannerisms of the professor. Needless to say, he was quite chagrined when told in the class in criti-

cism what he had been doing, for he was entirely unconscious of it. Doubtless these two instances are but types which could be reproduced in their essential characteristics from the observations of almost anyone. Their commonplace character, however, in no way impairs their significance as indicating quite clearly that in the process of personality development, vices, as well as virtues, are acquired through unconscious imitation. And it may very well be that in such unconscious imitation is to be found a partial explanation, at least, of the persistent spread of the various speech tones and inflections which are to be heard in the prayers, the Scripture readings, the sermons, and sometimes even in the intimations, of ministers, and which are commonly described as "the pulpit tone", or "the holy tone".

A second kind of imitation may be designated as conscious, or voluntary. It, in turn, may be divided into two sub-types on the basis of the degree of intelligence involved in the process. The first is conformity imitation, in which the primary end is merely to conform to the behaviour of the group. Tarde distinguishes between "custom imitation", which is conformity to the traditional behaviour of the group, and "fashion imitation", which is conformity to novel behaviour of the group.<sup>1</sup> In either case, however, the phenomenon is a manifestation of gregariousness, as we are using that term. Conformity imitation may be on a relatively low level, both as to intelligence and consciousness. For example, A may lift his hat in imitation of B, who has recognized a friend on a

<sup>1</sup> Laws of Imitation, pp. 245-251.

busy street. A may not have seen the friend at all, and may have been so busily engaged in conversation that he was scarcely aware of his imitative action. He is simply conforming to custom at the level of a habit which has become practically automatic. In fact, there is no very clear line of demarcation between imitation at this level and what has been designated as unconscious imitation. At a very much higher level of consciousness, but still relatively low in intelligence, would be the imitative conduct of an individual who attends a church service for the first time, and who copies the actions of the congregation with a very high degree of consciousness that he is imitating, but with a meagre intellectual apprehension of the significance of those actions. It is within this fluctuating range of intelligence and consciousness that a large proportion of religious ritual, folkways, customs, and other mores are diffused through the group and passed on as tradition, some of them being continued long after the conditions which originally gave rise to them have changed. It was the recognition of this fact that led Professor J. B. Pratt to assert that

"the authoritative nature of religion and its conservative and traditional elements must be put down to the score of society rather than to that of the individual. But between different kinds of religious tradition there are differences in the strength of conservatism. Especially is this seen to be the case if one compares religious beliefs with rites or customs. Approved ways of acting have been historically much more tenacious of life than approved ways of thinking. A curious example of this is the following instance related by Hoffding: 'In a Danish village church the custom of bowing when passing a certain spot in the church

wall was maintained into the nineteenth century, but no one knew the reason for this until, on the whitewash being scraped away, a picture of the Madonna was found on the wall; thus the custom had outlived the Catholicism which prompted it by three hundred years; it was a part of the old cult which had maintained itself'.<sup>1</sup>

This instance points up what is perhaps the chief liability of conformity imitation; namely, that it may be the means of perpetuating religious rites and customs which have ceased to have real meaning and value to the group. It is a danger of group life against which periodically the prophets of religion have cried out. As was pointed out earlier, the religious audience as a group is a mixture of both the traditional and the purposive. It is obvious, therefore, in view of the tendency of conformity imitation, that if the purposive aspects of religious group life are not to be obscured by the mere externals of traditional customs and ceremonies, the minister must repeatedly interpret to his changing congregation the ethical and religious significance of forms and rites, lest they be perpetuated as meaningless activities.<sup>2</sup>

A second sub-type of conscious, or voluntary, imitation may be designated as rational imitation. Attention has already been directed to the fact that there is not a clear line of demarcation between it and conformity imitation. In-

<sup>1</sup> Religious Consciousness, pp. 82-83.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the instructions received in an ancient prophet's vision: "Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel,---- shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof and all the ordinances thereof, and do them." Ezekiel 43:10-11.

deed, it may even have in common with the latter the purpose of conformity to the behaviour of the group, but with the difference that there is a more intelligent apprehension of the rational purpose of the behaviour which is imitated. For example, an individual in a religious audience may imitate the group in the bowing of the head and in the repetition of the Lord's Prayer, not merely in order to conform to the behaviour of the group, although that is a factor, but also in order to further the rational purpose of participating actively in that phase of common worship. There has been, in other words, a rational consideration of the significance of posture in prayer, the meaning of the phrases in the Lord's Prayer has been studied, and reflective thought has been given to the value of corporate worship. This process of critical weighing and evaluating gives to the imitative action the quality of rationality which raises the action to a distinctly higher level than that of mere conformity imitation. For that matter, the factor of a desire for conformity need not necessarily enter into rational imitation at all. An example would be a Protestant minister who crosses himself, after the manner of Roman Catholics, at the end of a prayer. To do so is not only not an act of conformity to his group, but decidedly the contrary; and in realization of that fact, he does so as unostentatiously as possible. In this case he is not blindly imitating a Romish custom, but, having given the matter considerable reflective thought, he has reached a rational conviction that such an imitation serves the purpose of a frequent reminder

of the sufferings of Jesus and is of value to him in his Christian life.

In this connection, one of the homiletical tasks of the preacher is clearly indicated--that of helping people to lift their moral and religious conduct from the lower level of mere conformity imitation to the higher level of rational imitation. This he can do, in part, by preaching sermons which are directed in their application primarily to the two spheres of life in which mere conformity imitation is most deadly in its effects on character--the sphere which is usually designated as the devotional life, and that which may be described as the sphere of social relationships in the more restricted sense in which that term is used in ordinary conversation. What was said above, with regard to the preacher's task of helping people to lift their activities of public worship from the level of mere conformity imitation to the higher level of more rational imitation, is equally applicable to the activities of private devotional life. Otherwise prayer is likely to descend to the low level of the "vain repetitions" which Jesus so severely condemned.<sup>1</sup> But a word needs to be said about lifting the level of conformity imitation to that of rational imitation in social relationships--such relationships, for example, as those between master and servant, men and women, employer and employee, parents and children, members of one race and members of another, of one nationality and another, and of one social class and another. Many Christian groups have ac-

<sup>1</sup> Mathew 6:7.

cepted in theory the lofty ideal of recognizing in all such relationships the sacredness of human personality as the foundation upon which the structure of social intercourse ought to be built. And, while it must be granted that it is not always exactly clear what course of action in a particular situation is in accord with that ideal, the more acute problem which confronts the minister as the leader of a Christian group is that of elevating practice more nearly to the level of accepted theory. In the form of a question, it is: How are customary modes of social conduct, which have been acquired largely by a process of conformity imitation within the larger group (the nation, race, class, etc.), and which may be pagan or semi-pagan, to be transformed into modes of conduct which are in accord with Christian standards which have been accepted in theory by the smaller group? That question is not merely an academic one. It is a practical one which confronts the minister as he endeavours to build a group of people who are heterogeneous socially, intellectually, economically, and in other significant ways, into the kind of Christian fellowship which the New Testament calls a koinonia, the broad outlines of which the Sermon on the Mount describes. As it pertains to intercourse between races, it is judged by many missionaries to be among the most crucial questions confronting the whole missionary enterprise. It is exactly this problem which Dr. Charles E. Jefferson made the central theme of his Yale lectures on preaching, and which he describes as follows:

"Let preachers, then, create in their churches by their preaching the spirit of love, and the churches will pass it on. The world will never listen to sermons on sympathy and good-will until these exist in heavenly abundance inside the church. What is the use of preachers trying to give the world a theory of something which the church itself does not practice? No man can preach love effectively over the body of a loveless church. Our immediate task is not to Christianize the world, but to Christianize the church. The church progressively Christianized will gradually Christianize society. God cuts our piece of work small in order that we may do it well. The task, though limited, is dynamic and far-reaching. The church, if leaven, will leaven the whole lump. Our first business is not with the lump, but with the leaven. He is the greatest preacher who so frames and utters the thoughts of God as to bind together the largest number of Christian hearts in closest fellowship for Christlike service."<sup>1</sup>

The answer to the question involved requires a discussion of the motives to imitation, but before taking up that subject, it will be well for us to consider more thoroughly than has been done in the preceding paragraphs the religious values of imitation.

#### Religious Values of Imitation.

The religious values of imitation are as numerous as the elements of religious culture which are capable and worthy of being reproduced imitatively, together with the values which are inherent in a general uniformity of behaviour within religious groups. There are liabilities, too, some of which have already been noted.

But the chief value with which we are concerned is that Christian personality may be developed, in part at least,

<sup>1</sup> The Building of the Church, pp. 77-78.



through the process of imitation. This value has three aspects which should be noted. First, there is the individual aspect, by which is meant simply that the values of imitation are viewed from the standpoint of the development of Christian personality in the individual. Of course, it must be frankly recognized that overt behaviour, whether the product of imitation or not, is not an infallible index to Christian personality. But, on the other hand, Christian personality apart from overt behaviour is a fiction. There is, therefore, valid concern for the development in the individual of modes of conduct which may be both expressive of Christian personality and productive of Christian personality. And the fact that the perceptible aspects of such modes of conduct can be imitated by the individual constitutes what we have called the individual aspect of the chief religious value of imitation.

A second aspect of this chief religious value of imitation may be called the group aspect. Perhaps the distinction between the two may be made clear by means of an illustration. Suppose we let M represent a model mode of conduct which is a stimulus to imitation in an individual, who is represented by I. That much of the illustration would represent the individual aspect of imitation. But suppose now that M is presented to a group of individuals--I, I<sub>a</sub>, I<sub>b</sub>, I<sub>c</sub>,.....I<sub>n</sub>. By virtue of the group situation, M ceases to be the only model-stimulus, and each individual in the group who responds imitatively to M becomes a reinforcing model-stimulus to every other individual. In other words,

the relation of imitators to an act imitated is generally what mathematicians would call a "many-one" relation. The spread tends to be by geometrical progression, rather than by arithmetical progression. This was Tarde's fundamental thesis in The Laws of Imitation,<sup>1</sup> and while it is doubtful whether the spread of currents of imitation can be reduced to such a rigorously mathematical formula, at least there is indicated in such a statement a significant general tendency. For by this process of mutual imitation, a mode of conduct is diffused in the group, not in the mechanical manner or to the uniform extent that the simplicity of the illustration we have used might suggest, but in a dynamic manner, and with a decided tendency towards approximate uniformity. Perhaps it is not too fanciful for the preacher to trust that by this process, in part at least, some of the seeds which he sows from the pulpit may fall into good ground and bring forth fruit, "some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold".<sup>2</sup>

Again, there is an inter-group aspect to the religious value of imitation. The modes of conduct which have been diffused through the group by the process of imitation may cross the boundary of that group and spread to other groups by the same process. The diffusion of imitated modes of conduct across group boundaries is very obvious in such religious movements as the Wesleyan Revival in England, the Great Awakening along the Atlantic coast in America under Edwards and

1 Chapters V, VI, and VII.

2 Mathew 13:8.

Whitefield, the revival in the Burnt District under Finney, and the Scotch-Irish Revival in Kentucky in 1800. And it has been observed more recently in connection with the activities of the "Oxford Groups", or "First Century Christian Fellowship".

Types of Models by Means of Which the Chief  
Value of Imitation May  
be Realized.

This chief value to religion of the process of imitation may be realized in the three aspects just noted by the use of two general types of models. One is the personal model, which, in turn, may be either concrete or abstract. By a concrete personal model is meant a living human being who is immediately perceptible to the imitator. Imitation of such a model is imitation in its simplest form. A little child in a religious audience, alertly watching, out of the corner of her eye, the people about her while bowing her head as they do during a prayer, is a familiar illustration of the imitation of concrete personal models. An abstract personal model is a person who is perceptible only mediately through memory or imagination. A three-year-old child was "playing Mamma" in putting her doll to bed one evening. "Now, baby", she said to the doll, "you go up stairs and wash your face and hands and get ready for bed. And don't you forget to wash your ears." After a brief interval, in which the "baby" was supposed to have carried out those instructions, she was being tucked into bed. "Now close your eyes", continued the would-be Mamma, "and when I go down stairs, don't you call me and say you

want a drink of water, because you've already had a drink of water! " That formula for putting a baby to bed was not being invented by that three-year-old child; she was imitating the memory-image of her own mother's actions in putting her to bed. Her model was thus personal, but abstract. And the individual's heroes of history and fiction belong in the same class of models.

But in addition to these two types of personal models, there are non-personal models, which are generalized concepts of actions or principles of action. As symbols, words come to stand for classes of actions, or for principles of action, which serve as models for the individual. The child, out of concrete experiences in the play group, for example, builds up a concept of fairness. It is not far removed from the concrete imagery of playmates acting as individuals. But through more experiences with other groups, and through reading and conversation, there is a gradual depersonalization of the separate acts and an integration of them into a type for which the verbal symbol "fairness" stands. Many proverbs and maxims of conduct belong in this class of non-personal models, and by means of them behaviour patterns are diffused and transmitted. Thus may the preacher use apothegms, proverbs, and other pithy sayings of the Scriptures as texts of sermons in which they are made vivid and memorable so that they become vital elements in the hearers' concepts of ideal behaviour.

### Motives to Imitation.

Returning now to a practical question which was raised as to how moral and religious conduct may be raised from the lower level of mere conformity imitation to the higher level of rational imitation, we may note that some of the motives to imitation have already been indicated incidentally, but the subject is of sufficient importance to warrant some further discussion. Of course, it is very difficult to isolate and designate the real motive of most human behaviour. If one speaks the language of the instinctivist school of psychology, the ultimate motives of all conduct are the instincts. Yet most conduct is a product of such a complex combination of instincts and their modifications in the forms of habits, that the isolation of one instinct as the motive in the case of a particular reaction is likely to prove to be only a partial designation of the motive. Rationalisation is a term which has come to have an important place in the psychology of motivation, and it lends much complication to the subject, although it is sometimes used in psychology to make very simple the explanation of otherwise mysterious conduct. While there are several forms of rationalisation, in its essence, as it involves motivation, it may be described as a process of ascribing to conduct a motive which is more acceptable to the individual, or the group, than the real motive. Thus, suppose that a student should decide to quit writing on his term paper for the afternoon and go to a football game. He

says to himself, and perhaps to his family also, "I have been working too much lately, and I am mentally fatigued. I should be better prepared to continue my writing after the exhilaration of watching the game." That, it might be said, is merely a fictitious substitute for the real motive, which is to escape the labour of difficult composition. And, conceivably, that might be a reasonably accurate explanation of the motivation in that particular case. Certainly it is true that the concept of rationalisation is a very useful one. But in many cases of alleged rationalisation, it is pertinent to raise the question as to whether the so-called real motive is any more real than the motive of seeking social approval, or the approval of one's own conscience, which contributed also to the making of the alleged rationalisation. The very fact that the rationalised motive is acceptable to the individual, or to the group, is a fact in which there is motive power, for without such an acceptable motive the conduct might be very different. All of which leads one to the conclusion that, since in normal behaviour the whole organism reacts to a total situation, when we select some part of the organism, or some part of the environment, or both, and assert that to be his motive to a particular course of action, we are not speaking with more than approximate accuracy. We are really just designating as the dominant factor some one of the several factors which constitute the whole motive. Of course, in the case of some very simple behaviour, it is quite possible that the factor selected may be considered, for all practical purposes, to be the motive.

But, as Professor G. A. Coe has clearly shown in his book on The Motives of Men, most human conduct is quite complex in its motivation, and if one is to interpret behaviour at all accurately, that fact must be kept in mind.

Fully recognizing, then, that in attempting to list some of the motives to imitation one is really listing what probably may be only the dominant factors in the motivation of imitation, the task is still not a simple one. For, if motivation be regarded from the standpoint of the "push" from within the organism towards a course of action, there are as many motives as there are needs, wants, instincts, or other drives in the organism. And the list of motives to imitation would be made up of those drives which are capable of being satisfied, or realized, through imitative action. On the other hand, if motivation be regarded from the standpoint of the "pull" from without the organism towards a course of action, then there are as many motives as there are different external stimuli to action. And the list of motives to imitation would be made up accordingly of those stimuli which are capable of producing imitative action. As a matter of fact, however, it is questionable whether there is ever a specific "push" from within the organism without a reference to some "pull" from without. An individual does not merely want; he wants something. He does not just hunger; he hungers for food. One suspects that, when the Gestalt psychology has been developed to more maturity, the concept of configuration may serve to obviate the confusion which now attends the dis-

inction between the "push" and the "pull" factors in motivation.

In the meantime, practical purposes probably are served best by the use of quite ordinary, conversational terms which tend to blend these two elements in motivation. After this manner, Professor H. A. Overstreet has presented the following list of fundamental human wants: the satisfaction of such appetites as hunger, thirst, and sex; comfort, affectionate devotion, play, security, ownership, efficiency, social esteem, aesthetic satisfactions, adventure, travel, leadership, novelty, propriety, constructive achievement, conquest, sympathy, help for the weaker, humour, harmony with one's fellows, and harmony with the universe.<sup>1</sup> Such a list cannot pretend to be exhaustive, but only suggestive.

Probably in no field of applied psychology has motivation been more thoroughly studied, or employed on a wider scale, than in the field of advertising. And while some of the motives to which the advertiser appeals, and some of the techniques he uses, are on a low ethical plane which renders them of no value to the preacher in his task, at the same time discriminative use can be made in the field of homiletics of some of the work which has been done with advertising primarily in view.

The following table was designed to show the relative strength of certain motives--that term being used in a loose and broad sense. The results were secured by asking

<sup>1</sup> Influencing Human Behaviour, pp. 34-42.



74 men and women to take 44 motives and carry out the following instructions:

"Consider the strength and importance of these motives or incentives to action from the standpoint of your own personal life and behaviour as a whole. Ask yourself in connection with each one how important it is in determining your own actions from day to day. Write 10 after the very strongest motives, and a number between 0 and 10 after the others, according to their relative strength or importance."<sup>1</sup>

Table I<sup>2</sup>  
The Relative Strength of Motives

Motive	Value	Motive	Value
Appetite--hunger	9.2	Respect for Deity	7.1
Love of offspring	9.1	Sympathy for others	7.0
Health	9.0	Protection of others	7.0
Sex attraction	8.9	Domesticity	7.0
Parental affection	8.9	Social distinction	6.9
Ambition	8.6	Devotion to others	6.8
Pleasure	8.6	Hospitality	6.6
Bodily comfort	8.4	Warmth	6.5
Possession	8.4	Imitation	6.5
Approval by others	8.0	Courtesy	6.5
Gregariousness	7.9	Play--sport	6.5
Taste	7.8	Managing others	6.4
Personal appearance	7.8	Coolness	6.2
Safety	7.8	Fear--caution	6.2
Cleanliness	7.7	Physical activity	6.0
Rest--sleep	7.7	Manipulation	6.0
Home comfort	7.5	Construction	6.0
Economy	7.5	Style	5.8
Curiosity	7.5	Humour	5.8
Efficiency	7.3	Amusement	5.8
Competition	7.3	Shyness	4.2
Cooperation	7.1	Teasing	2.6

With regard to this table, Dr. Poffenberger notes:

"There is one source of error that is especially likely to creep into such studies as this; namely, that one's idea of what motives are proper and commendable is likely to govern his choices rather than their real potency. This is a further illustration of social pressure or repression, as the Freudians call it. Still, there is no particular evidence of such an error in this table, for

<sup>1</sup> Poffenberger, A. T., Psychology in Advertising, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

the sex motive stands high, and that is the one which is usually most affected by social pressure. It is to be noted that the motives that we have said are based on an insistent bodily need--namely, hunger and thirst, sex, and bodily comfort--stand at the top of the table, along with those that have great biological significance--namely, health, love of offspring, parental affection--and further, that all but two of the motives in the list, shyness and teasing, fall in the upper half of our scale from 0 to 10. Nineteen of them are in the highest quarter of the scale. This means that all the motives but two are at least strong enough to justify their use when other conditions warrant."<sup>1</sup>

We may note further some very glaring defects in this table. The exact meaning of some of the so-called motives is not clear from the names used, so that apparently there is much ambiguity and overlapping. Warmth, coolness, and sleep, for example, are simply elements in bodily comfort. And, for our purpose, some confusion is produced by the listing of imitation itself as a motive. Moreover, it is difficult to see how some of the "motives" could be appealed to in a sermon under any circumstances. Yet, in view of the way in which the data were secured and tabulated, a large portion of the list might simply be eliminated as irrelevant without seriously impairing the value of the remainder as some indication of the relative strength of certain impelling motives to conduct, to which the preacher may appeal in his sermons.

Few of the recognized text-books on homiletics have dealt with the question of motivation to any considerable extent, except to set forth the general principles of argumentation. But at least one recognized authority, Professor

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 85-86.

Alexander Vinet, has faced realistically the fact that the preacher, as well as the advertiser, must deal with man as he is, and not as one would like him to be. In a section devoted to motives, he says:

"Wherever our object is to determine the will, we must do one of two things: either address ourselves to an affection already existing, appeal to it, and excite it by presenting to it the objects with which it is maintained; or create affections in regard to the end we have in view. But the second case never occurs, at least in an absolute sense. We can awaken the affections; we cannot create them. The inclination...or the want exists; if it did not exist, in vain should we evoke it....The business, then, in all cases, is to present to the soul what is capable of attracting it....So long as you have done nothing but prove,--so long as your proof reaches nothing in the man but his intellect,--the hearer has not been touched,--he remains intact....Motive, inclination, or affection, the name is of little consequence--this is what is necessary for the determination of the will, and, consequently, essential to eloquence."<sup>1</sup>

Vinet then asserts that "all the motives, of which we can make levers, may be reduced to these two--moral good (which he interprets to be synonymous with duty), and happiness".<sup>2</sup> And, as coming under one or the other of these two classes, or both, he enumerates self-love, in the sense of esteem for the dignity of human nature; sentiment of the beautiful, when properly linked to the good; and sympathetic affections, such as family affections, love of country, friendship, admiration, and gratitude.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Vinet obviously speaks in terms of the old

<sup>1</sup> Homiletics, pp. 175-177.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 183-185.

"faculty" psychology, but his terms are easily translated into those of contemporary psychology, and when that is done, it is evident that he was reasoning in harmony with our contention that the preacher can lift behaviour which is on the lower level of mere conformity imitation (whether the behaviour itself be judged to be moral, immoral, or non-moral) to the higher level of ethically desirable rational imitation by three means which are embraced in the technique of persuasion.

The first is instruction. The distinction between the undesirable and the desirable modes of conduct must be made intelligible to the hearers by a process of exposition, or explanation, which involves the familiar rhetorical techniques of analysis, description, narration, comparison, example, anecdote, metaphor, simile, and the like. Thus are the alternatives presented which involve a choice. This technique must be supplemented (though it is not essential that the order here presented be followed in every case) by what is usually designated as argument--the setting forth of the logical reasons for abandoning the undesirable course of conduct and embracing the desirable course. And, thirdly, the ethically, or religiously, desirable course must be associated in the minds of the hearers with such motives as are already operative in their lives; it must be clearly shown to be a means towards some end or goal which is already desirable to the hearers.<sup>1</sup> As individuals mature in their religious ex-

1 Cf. Macpherson, Wm., The Psychology of Persuasion: "Before a man will act he must be persuaded that the action will answer some end; and that which gratifies no emotion or sentiment in his nature can never be an end for him." p. 19.

perience, and their ideals become more refined ethically, higher and higher motives may be appealed to by the preacher in his sermons. But if the preacher keeps in view the heterogeneous character of the religious audience, he is less likely to overshoot his target, so to speak, by aiming at motives that do not yet motivate a considerable portion of his audience. The contribution of social psychology to homiletics at this point, then, is not a new technique, but an emphasis of the significance of a very old technique which seems to have been neglected, both in theory and in practice.

#### Imitation and Biographical Sermons.

It is evident from this study of imitation in the religious audience that biographical materials should have a large place in preaching. This judgment is in accord with the classifications of types of sermons which have been made on the basis of the kinds of material which are predominant in them, by those homiletical authorities who have classified sermons at all on such a basis. Dr. John A. Broadus, for example, whose text-book has probably been used more than any other in America for the past sixty years, classifies sermons on a material basis as being of four general types--or possibly five.<sup>1</sup> First, there are sermons primarily doctrinal in content, a type which he sub-divides into three groups--those which are "doctrinal proper", those which are apologetic, and those which are polemic. Secondly, sermons may be predominantly moral, or ethical. Thirdly, there are historical sermons

<sup>1</sup> Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, pp. 59-83.

of two sub-types--those which treat, for the most part, of God's dealings with families, tribes, nations, and other social groups in history, and those which are biographical, treating of God's dealings with individual characters of history. Fourthly, sermons which present the gospel largely in terms of man's experience of God's grace in the developing Christian life are called "experimental sermons". And, as a possible fifth class, he mentions sermons for special occasions, such as funerals, church anniversaries, religious festivals, commencements, and the like. Thus, the biographical sermon is given recognition as a specific sub-type under historical sermons. And, to some extent in all these types, unless the sermons are extremely abstract in their treatment, use must be made of biographical materials for illustrative purposes, if for no other. Moreover, a considerable number of the sermons one reads in printed volumes, or hears preached from pulpits, are sermons which might be called biographical sermons.<sup>1</sup> Especially in those churches which observe a church

<sup>1</sup> An interesting variety of the biographical sermon, which might be called the "autobiographical sermon", has been used effectively by several American preachers. In this variety the preacher, throughout the sermon, impersonates some Biblical character, as if that character were alive and standing in the pulpit to interpret his own life and bring his own message to the congregation. The characters of Judas Iscariot, Zacchaeus the tax-gatherer, and Nicodemus the pharisee, have been thus treated, respectively, by Professor J. M. Vander Meulen, of the Louisville Presbyterian Seminary; Rev. Dr. J. W. G. Ward, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Oak Park, Illinois; and Rev. Dr. Peter H. Pleune, pastor of the Highland Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Kentucky. It is a daring variety of sermon, and requires unusual dramatic skill, but when done with sincerity and restraint, it is a most effective variety of preaching. Manuscript copies of the sermons mentioned above are in the library of the Louisville Presbyterian Seminary.

calendar, but also in most of the other churches, the saints of history (particularly those whose lives are chronicled to some extent in the Bible) have their lives periodically presented in sermons as models to be imitated by contemporary men. Still more often are episodes in the life of Jesus portrayed, or aspects of His character interpreted, as the supreme example of godly living. Sometimes the biographical treatment in such sermons is well done, and sometimes biographical sermons are as dull and uninspiring as history which is merely the matter-of-fact narration of events in a rigorously chronological order.

Now, these observations on biographical sermons, and on the use of biographical materials in sermons which may be predominantly of some other type, are perhaps quite commonplace in themselves. But they assume a new significance when associated with the fact that in no text-book on homiletics which we have examined is more than a paragraph or two devoted to the technique of preaching biographical sermons. Probably the heart of the existing published theory on this subject might be summed up in a few sentences from Dr. James Black's Sprunt Lectures on Preaching:

"Generally, I think this type of preaching should be done pictorially, with some imaginative treatment, and in a dramatic setting....Sketch your situation as if you were painting it....Do not let it (your moral comment) be too obvious."<sup>1</sup>

These suggestions are then followed by a timely warning against the tendency to paint characters as if any of them were either

<sup>1</sup> The Mystery of Preaching, p. 141.

all "white" or all "black".<sup>1</sup>

Yet the treatment of biographical materials with homiletical aims in view is a task which requires no little skill. Such skill may be acquired by the preacher through the use of the "trial-and-error" method, to be sure, and many preachers have developed the art of biographical preaching to a high degree of perfection by that method. But what Dr. Black has said with regard to learning rules of homiletics in general is particularly applicable to learning rules, or principles, of biographical preaching. "In our profession", he writes, "it is needful to know the laws of our art: if they do nothing more, they will at least save us from crude and expensive mistakes. Roger Ascham remarks in The Scholemaster: 'It is marvelous pain to find out a short way by long wandering'. The one gain of learning the art of preaching is that it may save us from this 'long wandering'!"<sup>2</sup>

The materials, in the form of numerous volumes of admirable biographical sermons,<sup>3</sup> are available which might be carefully analysed, after which some guiding principles for biographical preaching might be formulated by a process of inductive study. Such a work would constitute a major

1 Op. cit., pp. 141-143.

2 Ibid., p. 20.

3 Among these materials, for example, are the following: Black, Rogues of the Bible; Chappell, Sermons on Old Testament Characters, Sermons on New Testament Characters, Familiar Failures; Guice, The First Friends of the Finest Friend; Macartney, These Twelve; Mackay, Bible Types of Modern Men, Bible Types of Modern Women, Men Whom Jesus Made; Matheson, Representative Men of the Bible, Representative Women of the Bible; Miller, Women of the Bible.



contribution to homiletical literature. And, while a task of such scope and magnitude cannot be included as a detail in this paper, if imitation, in the forms which have been described in this chapter, is of anything like the significance which we have assigned it in the mental processes of the religious audience, there is surely indicated here a deficiency in the literature of homiletics which ought to be remedied.

"Proof may be conveyed through the audience when it is worked up by the speech to an emotional state. For there is a wide difference in our manner of pronouncing decisions, according as we feel pleasure or pain, affection or hatred; and indeed the power of working upon the emotions is, as we assert, the one end or object to which our present professors of the rhetorical art endeavour to direct their studies."--Aristotle.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SYMPATHY IN THE RELIGIOUS AUDIENCE

According to Professor C. A. Ellwood,<sup>1</sup> the sympathy theory of society is even older than the imitation theory, having been first explicitly formulated by Adam Smith in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, first published in 1759. Smith was, in turn, followed by Darwin, Sutherland, Ward, and Giddings in giving to sympathy a large place among the processes of social interaction. Such an estimate of the significance of sympathy is not surprising when one considers the function of feeling in group life. For even more impressive than the spread of ideas through the process of suggestion, and the spread of actions by means of imitation, is the spread of emotion, with its affective qualities of pleasantness or unpleasantness, through the process of sympathy.

#### The Nature of Sympathy.

But, while sympathy has been assigned a place of primary importance in many works of social psychology, by no means has there been a uniform interpretation of the nature of sympathy by the various authorities. It becomes desirable, therefore, to inquire into the nature of sympathy, which we have already defined as a process by which feelings and emotions are diffused in the group. Professor McDougall has advanced a theory, which is usually known as the theory of "sympathetic induction of emotion", to explain how the instinctive

1 The Psychology of Human Society, p. 378.

behaviour of one animal directly excites similar behaviour on the part of his fellows. He observes, for example, how when two dogs within sound and sight begin to stiffen themselves and show every symptom of anger, and how when one beast in a herd stands arrested, gazing in curiosity on some unfamiliar object, presently his fellows also, even though the object be to them invisible, display curiosity and come up to join in the examination of it. And his explanation of these phenomena is

"that in the gregarious animals each of the principal instincts has a special perceptual inlet (or recipient afferent part) that is adapted to receive and to elaborate the sense-impressions made by the expressions of the same instinct in other animals of the same species--that, e. g., the fear-instinct has, besides others, a special perceptual inlet that renders it excitable by the sound of the cry of fear, the instinct of pugnacity a perceptual inlet that renders it excitable by the sound of the roar of anger."<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere, in his interpretation of crowd psychology, Dr. McDougall indicates with an excellent illustration the significance which he attaches to "primitive sympathy" in human groups.

"This principle of direct induction of emotion by way of the primitive sympathetic response", he says, "enables us to understand the fact that a concourse of people (or animals) may be **quickly** turned into a panic-stricken crowd by some threatening object which is perceptible by only a few of the individuals present. A few persons near the stage of a theatre see flames dart out among the wings; then, though the flames may be invisible to the rest of the house, the expressions of the startled few induce fear in their neighbours, and the excitement sweeps over the whole concourse like fire blown across the prairie."<sup>2</sup>

1 Social Psychology, pp. 96-97.

2 The Group Mind, p. 37.

This theory is attractive in its simplicity of statement and plausible in the illustrations presented in its support, but it is difficult to see how it can survive the objections which come from two sources. One is the results of certain experiments bearing upon the problem of the identification of emotions from their perceptible expressions in others. Murphy and Murphy, in their report on investigations with regard to innate patterns of facial expression of emotion, report experiments conducted by Feleky, Langfeld, Allport, and Guilford, concluding on the basis of these experiments that "the evidence is strong that there is no basis upon which an innate capacity to interpret emotional patterns can be predicated".<sup>1</sup> These experiments, it should be noted, are restricted to the visual perception of facial expressions in selected pictures. Furthermore, it is assumed that subjects must be able to name (though with the aid of lists of emotional expressions which include the correct name) the emotion expressed in the picture, in order to share that emotion.

The experiments of Langfeld and of Allport are more fully recorded and interpreted in the latter's Social Psychology.<sup>2</sup> According to that record, the general accuracy of individuals in identifying facial expressions of emotion is less than fifty percent, and it seems evident that the proficiency of different individuals in this regard is due, not

<sup>1</sup> Experimental Social Psychology, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 222-230.

to innate reaction to expression, but to the amount of training, or effort at learning, which they have experienced. The experiments of H. C. Harshbarger to discover the accuracy with which individuals identify expressions of emotion which include manual and postural gestures, as well as facial expressions, indicate a rather high degree of efficiency on the part of the subjects in their identifications. But a number of the subjects were students who had been drilled in the meanings of gesture, and the experiments do not throw any light on the sympathetic induction of emotion.<sup>1</sup> Neither do the experiments of G. S. Gates, M. Sherman, and F. L. Wells on the identification of vocal expressions of emotion.<sup>2</sup> On what may be considered the response to the vocal expression of an attitude, rather than of a single emotion, however, Murphy and Murphy present the following significant conclusions on the basis of studies made on the social behaviour of very young children.

"The smile, which eventually becomes a general reaction elicited by a wide range of stimuli, appears for a time (approximately the second to the fourth month) chiefly in response to the voice. To the casual observer the response is utterly indiscriminating--scolding will bring quite as joyful a smile to the child as affectionate talk, and angry talk as amiable an expression as a lullaby.... It takes months of growing up before the children 'know' that the proper response to an angry voice is crying, and that scolding is good cause for disquietude and anxiety, while smiles are reserved for friendly, loving and playful tones."<sup>3</sup>

1 Murphy and Murphy, Experimental Social Psychology, pp. 516-517.

2 Ibid., pp. 72-73.

3 Ibid., p. 260. Italics mine.

It cannot fairly be contended that these experiments are conclusive in the refutation of Dr. McDougall's theory. But at least it is valid to say that at points at which it would be reasonable to expect them to lend some support to the theory, if it is true, they fail to do so.

Moreover, the theory is at variance with some of the most common experiences of life. A little child in our family is very much afraid of dogs, and frequently we witness her flight, accompanied by screams and facial expressions of terror, without sharing in the least degree her emotion of fear.<sup>1</sup> And, if two men are engaged in a fight, the witnesses do not uniformly share their emotion of anger.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes they are merely amused. And even laughter, which is generally considered to be so "contagious", will sometimes evoke only disgust, or some other response, on the part of witnesses. Who has not

1 In his Social Psychology, 15th edition, footnote, p. 95, Dr. McDougall relates an incident in which he was holding a child in his arms, looking out of a window on a dark night. There came a blinding flash of lightning, followed by a crash of thunder, whereupon the child screamed in terror. "Immediately upon hearing the scream", says Dr. McDougall, "I experienced, during a fraction of a second, a pang of fear that could not have been more horrible had I been threatened with all the terrors of hell." This he considers to be an illustration of two points; "first, the sympathetic induction of emotion by another; secondly, the specific character of loud noises as excitants of fear". It seems likely that the second of these two points covers the whole case. Dr. McDougall declares that he is not at all disturbed by thunder when alone, and we should not like to be understood as questioning this statement. But even when we have learned usually to inhibit fear responses to certain familiar loud sounds like thunder, it is a matter of common experience that such sounds sometimes occur with such suddenness and intensity that we respond with a strong fear reaction, and it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that this may have been the case with Dr. McDougall on the occasion which he describes.

2 Cf. Smith, Adam, Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 6.

seen a little child burst into tears on perceiving the hilarious laughter of parents, or other adults, which was evoked by some situation unnoticed by the child and apparently unrelated to him? It appears, therefore, that there is good ground for questioning the validity of Dr. McDougall's theory of the sympathetic induction of emotions.<sup>1</sup>

Much more in accord with the facts, it seems, is the principle of the "conditioned emotional response", which Professor Allport has described in terms of Dr. McDougall's illustration of the panic which may seize all the members of a throng when only a few of them have actually witnessed the cause for alarm. His explanation of the process of sympathy in such a case is as follows:

"We have been previously terrified in company with others and so have had our fear emotion transferred to characteristic attendant stimuli, such as the cries and visible expressions of the emotion in those about us. We now react at once to the sight of fear in others by a fear response of our own. Here the conception of sympathetic induction loses its force. We fear not merely because we see the expression of fear in others; but because we have learned to read these expressions as signs that there is something to be afraid of. It is not fear induced from others that we experience, but our own fear of dangerous situations which has been conditioned by social stimuli."<sup>2</sup>

But whatever be the theory which correctly interprets the way in which sympathy functions, the fact of the spread of feelings in the group by a process which we may call sympathy remains. Moreover, even if it be granted that a sympathetic reaction is an innate general tendency, there is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ginsberg, M., The Psychology of Society, pp. 31-32.

<sup>2</sup> Social Psychology, p. 235.



no question that learning is a factor of primary significance in the sympathetic reactions of a group of people. So that, without interpreting "the conditioned response" as being synonymous with the narrower concept of "the conditioned reflex", we shall employ that term to describe the nature of sympathy in the religious audience.

### Two Types of Sympathy.

With this conception of the nature of sympathy, we may distinguish two general types of sympathetic responses with which the minister is concerned as a preacher. The more fundamental of the two types may be designated as primary sympathy. It is the type which is in accord with the etymological meaning of the word--feeling with others, or sharing with others their emotions, or emotions which are approximately like theirs. For example, A receives news of a serious accident in which his friend, B, has been crippled. Having gone through the shock of an accident himself, and having undergone the painful experience of having broken bones set, and remembering the loneliness of long days and sleepless nights in a hospital permeated with the sickening odor of ether, A shares the emotions of B. Such primary sympathy would probably be in its most vivid and intense form. It is not necessary, however, that A must have had so nearly the same experience as B in order to share his feelings, for imagination will suffice to construct a situation which is sufficiently similar to arouse quite similar feelings. But usage sanctions another meaning

of sympathy, which may be regarded as secondary sympathy. It is a feeling for others, rather than merely a feeling with others. In the case just cited, this secondary sympathy may be evident, as well as the primary. Let us suppose, for example, that the doctor has informed A, but not B, that there is little likelihood of B's recovery from his injury. A then sympathizes with B in the sense that he has a feeling of pity or compassion for him. These two types of sympathetic response are not fundamentally unlike, but the distinction is useful in a study of the function of sympathy in group life.

#### Functions of Sympathy in the Religious Audience.

Whether in primitive races, or in the most cultured civilization, feeling is a primary evaluator of ideas and activities. It is no longer necessary to subscribe to the hedonistic psychology, which made pleasure and pain the sole motives to behaviour, in order to recognize that the social life of man is not only embedded in feeling, but also largely controlled by feeling. It is not always the controlling factor in man's evaluation of ideas and activities, but it is a factor, and one of such significance to the minister in his preaching that it cannot be disregarded without serious consequences to the effectiveness of his ministry. Feeling is primarily a powerful conservative force in group life, because it reenforces those habitual activities which represent the modifications of instincts in the members who compose the group. This is true of any group, but it is especially evident in the religious group, where ideas and activities are

saturated in feeling to such a high degree. The preacher may be able in his sermons to set forth novel doctrines or unfamiliar courses of action with irrefutable logic, but if they arouse strongly hostile feelings, in all probability his logic will be of no avail. The strength of feelings in the evaluation of ideas and activities furnishes the pulpit demagogue with his most powerful weapon, for he may use it to maintain the status quo in the face of progressive changes in religious ideas, customs, and institutions which ought to be made. But the same weapon is also a means of defence against the innumerable innovations which are a constant threat to the stability and efficiency of the religious group.

Probably the most significant bearing of this function of feeling on the work of the preacher is what may be described as a negative bearing on his delivery of sermons. It is obviously not always true that if the preacher, in the process of delivering his sermon, reveals through his posture, facial expressions, manual gestures, and the various expressive qualities of the voice, his feelings with regard to the ideas in his sermon, the audience will sympathetically share those feelings with him. Other things being equal, there may be a normal tendency for that to be the case. But certainly it is true that if, in the delivery of the sermon, the preacher fails to reveal, let us say, feelings of lively interest in what he is saying, the congregation will regard his ideas with his own apathetic evaluation of them. This is not to commend "tearing passions to tatters". Nor is it to suggest that vigour of de-

livery can atone for thinness of thought. It is simply to say that if the preacher is not perceptibly animated with regard to his own subject, and what he has to say about it, he is almost certain to find that his own emotional attitude will be sympathetically shared by the religious audience, with the usual consequences of inattention and the unpleasant feelings which are the emotional aspects of boredom.

A second function of feeling in group life is very similar to the first. Because feelings may be revealed through posture, gesture, and facial expressions, even without the aid of vocalization, they often furnish to the individual an index to the attitude of the group, or of portions of it, which serve as a guide to action. A child, for example, upon perceiving the attitude of disapproval revealed in the faces of his elders in response to an embarrassing question he has asked at the dinner table in the presence of guests, may thus take his cue for relative silence during the rest of the meal. Likewise the preacher--if he be not too much enslaved to a manuscript in his delivery--may perceive the restlessness, or apathy, of his audience while he is engaged in abstruse, metaphysical discourse, and move on in his thought to a happy illustration before he has completely lost their attention. In fact, the inability of the preacher who reads closely from a manuscript to perceive such subtle expressions of feeling on the part of the audience, and to adapt his discourse to their changing reactions, is one of the strongest of all the arguments advanced

against reading as a method of delivery.<sup>1</sup>

A third important function of sympathy in the religious audience is to diffuse the feeling elements in sentiments and ideals. Dr. McDougall has defined a sentiment as "an organized system of emotional dispositions centred about the idea of some object".<sup>2</sup> And an ideal may be defined as an idea of a relatively perfect type of anything, together with a desire that the relatively perfect type may become actual.<sup>3</sup> In other words, ideals are species of sentiments. Their significance in relation to the development of character can hardly be overestimated. Dr. Gardner has strikingly characterized the relations of sentiments and ideals to character by saying, "Sentiments other than ideals are indices of character as already organized; ideals are sign boards which point the direction in which character is developing".<sup>4</sup> And the social, as well as the individual, importance of the growth of sentiments has been admirably stated by Dr. McDougall as follows:

"The growth of the sentiments is of the utmost importance for the character and conduct of individuals and of societies; it is the organization of the affective and conative life. In the absence of sentiments our emotional life would be a mere chaos, without order, consistency, or continuity of any kind; and all our social relations and conduct, being based on the emotions and their impulses, would be correspondingly chaotic, unpredictable, and unstable. It is only through the systematic organization of the emotional dispositions in sentiments that the volitional control of the immediate promptings of the emotions is rendered possible. Again, our judgments of value and of

1 For additional arguments against reading, see Broadus, Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, pp. 291-295; Johnson, The Ideal Ministry, pp. 228-230; Van Oosterzee, Practical Theology, p. 334.

2 Social Psychology, 15th edition, p. 159.

3 Cf. Gardner, Psychology and Preaching, pp. 105-106.

4 Ibid., p. 109.

merit are rooted in our sentiments; and our moral principles have the same source, for they are formed by our judgments of moral value."<sup>1</sup>

In light of these statements, it is evident that one of the tasks of the minister, not only in his preaching, but also in his public prayers, his reading of the scriptures, and his conduct of other parts of the service of worship, is the building up of Christian sentiments. How this can be done may best be indicated by considering the process by which a child's sentiment of love for his mother is developed. She feeds him, fondles him, and repeatedly does those things which bring to the child feelings of satisfaction and joy. By this process there grows up around the mother in the experience of the child a feeling-disposition of love. As the child grows older and observes similar reactions of other children towards their mothers, there develops the concept of motherhood, and out of his concrete sentiment for his own mother, together with his experience of other mothers, there develops the abstract sentiment for motherhood. In other words, the sentiment is developed by "the repeated excitation of the appropriate feelings in connection with an object, or an idea, and the appropriate expression of those feelings".<sup>2</sup> Now the preacher, in his pulpit ministry, is endeavouring, among other things, to build moral and religious sentiments. If he is to accomplish this part of his task in an intelligent manner, he needs to know how sentiments are developed in men. A. F. Shand

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., pp. 159-160.

<sup>2</sup> Gardner, C. S., op. cit., p. 111.

has formulated what he calls the fundamental law of mental organization, which is as follows: "Mental activity tends, at first unconsciously, afterwards consciously, to produce and to sustain system and organization."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in such a system some one sentiment tends to become dominant, with all the other sentiments subordinately grouped about it. If the dominant sentiment in a given system is limited in its scope, or unworthy in its focal idea or object, the consequence is inevitably an inferior character. The Christian minister, however, believes that there is one sentiment which is worthy of being the dominant sentiment in the mental systems of all men. It is the two-fold, or double-aspect, sentiment in terms of which Jesus summed up all the law and the prophets: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."<sup>2</sup> All other worthy sentiments, we believe, may be correlated with, and subordinated to, that as the dominant sentiment in the Christian character. But all the sentiments must be built into the characters of men, and by the same fundamental process.

Like all the mental processes, sentiments have their cognitive, conative, and affective aspects. But in this chapter we are concerned primarily with the affective aspects and the ways in which they may be stimulated and diffused in the religious audience. As was indicated above in connection

<sup>1</sup> The Foundations of Character, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 10:27.

with the development of the child's sentiment of love for his mother, it is only by the repeated stimulation of the appropriate feelings towards an object or idea that a sentiment is built up. This involves two things on the part of the preacher. First, in the composition of sermons and prayers, care should be given to the choice of words and phrases with emotional connotations which are appropriate to the sentiment he is expressing, so that they may serve as effective secondary stimuli in the sympathetic induction of feelings. Secondly, as the leader on whom the attention of the religious audience is centred, the preacher's own feelings, as revealed--even to ever so slight an extent--in voice and gesture, should likewise serve as effective secondary stimuli to the sympathetic induction of those feelings which are to be organized about some idea or object.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Sunday after Sunday, may the preacher build into the lives of his congregation those sentiments which, when progressively organized and correlated with the dominant Christian sentiment of whole-hearted love for God and one's fellowmen, constitute strong Christian character.

The fourth function of sympathy in the religious audience which should be noted is the part it plays in the creation and maintenance of group morale, or esprit de corps. In the case of a religious audience which has continuity of existence, such as the congregation, group morale is of vital

<sup>1</sup> In this connection, one wonders why it should be the custom in so many churches to dim the lights just before the beginning of the sermon with the result that the minister's face is in a shadow and its expressiveness completely lost to the larger portion of the audience.



significance. Being a voluntary organization, the very life and effective functioning of the congregation depends largely on the loyalty and enthusiasm of its members. And, being a religious organization, its most distinctive characteristic is to be found in the two-fold fellowship of man with man and of man with God--a fellowship which it is the minister's responsibility to help to make real and dynamic in the lives of the members, both for the sake of the individuals as such, and for the sake of the function of the group as a group. The place of feeling in such a relationship is indicated by Principal Hughes as follows:

"Now the essence of personal relationship is in feeling. In this realm of emotion we become most at one with each other. In the sweep of a deep emotion a nation finds its most real unity, just as it is in the grip of intense feeling that a congregation becomes a real spiritual fellowship with a higher unity of life and purpose that is a true communion of souls. Reason seems to some extent to be a divisive force, and here it is that men fight for their opinions, and are ever ready to take up sides and emphasize their differences. Conation also seems to make more for individualism and separation. But feeling seems to fuse the many into one, as may be seen when a great orator or actor sways the thought and feeling of an audience as if it were one man. It is in this region of feeling that personal relationships touch the deepest note and find the most complete satisfaction."<sup>1</sup>

This is a clear statement of the place of feeling in the creation of unified group fellowship which is the foundation of esprit de corps. If we were merely concerned with the psychology of the religious audience, this statement, together with the reminder that feelings may be communicated by the

1 The New Psychology and Religious Experience, pp. 157-158.

process of sympathy, would suffice. But in relation to preaching, it is desirable that we consider also five specific means of creating and maintaining group morale, in each of which sympathy is an important factor.

One means is the employment of interests which are common to the members of the group and which are clothed in the robes of the ideal. Such ideals as truth, beauty, honour, justice, freedom, or service may be vague in their denotation to the members of a group, but they are powerful in binding a group together and in furnishing impetus to collective activity. They are generalizations created in the long experience of the race, sanctioned almost universally, and powerfully charged with emotion. E. D. Martin writes with scorn of the manner in which crowd orators employ such ideals, and he refers to them as terms "which have a meaning for everybody and is a meaning for nobody".<sup>1</sup> But let it be granted that they are frequently used in this way to lead crowds into irrational decisions and hasty actions; the essential truth is not that such tools may be perverted in their use, but that they are effective means of creating and communicating esprit de corps in a group. By such a means may the anarchist diffuse a spirit of revolution among his followers; but by the same fundamental means may the preacher diffuse the spirit of Christianity through a religious audience which is very heterogeneous from the standpoint of the particular beliefs held by its members.

<sup>1</sup> The Behaviour of Crowds, p. 30.

Another way of securing and maintaining strong cohesion within the group is by means of conflict and rivalry. Patriotism of a predominantly emotional quality seldom rises to such heights of intensity in a nation in times of peace as in times of war. When the interest and loyalty of a Bible class begin to lag, at least temporary success in recovering group morale is almost certainly assured when a contest is started between it and another Bible class. Or, the same end may sometimes be accomplished by dividing the group into two sections, each of which is pitted against the other in friendly rivalry. Even abstractions will serve as effective "enemies" in welding the group together, and it is this fact which is of particular concern to the preacher. Reverend W. A. (Billy) Sunday, in his famous evangelistic campaigns, thus welded theologically and socially heterogeneous American audiences into cohesive groups by leading them into war against the Demon John Barleycorn. In a similar way "liberalism", "higher criticism", "humanism", "naturalism", and many other such terms are often used by preachers primarily to designate "enemies" of Christianity against whom the soldiers of the cross must be mobilized to fight, and they serve their purpose of generating and communicating group morale.

Discipline and self-sacrifice also may furnish an impetus to esprit de corps. If an individual, or a sub-group, voluntarily makes some sacrifice on behalf of the group, that sacrifice becomes an emotionally charged dramatization of the

submission of the part to the whole. Thus a Communist, having been refused permission by the municipal authorities to speak at a given time and place, and knowing full well the penalty for doing so, attempts to make his speech, is arrested, and is thrown into jail by the police, but he has the satisfaction of knowing that his sacrifice will serve to mould his comrades into a closer unity and to kindle anew their enthusiasm for their cause. Mahatma Gandhi, in his numerous imprisonments and periods of fasting, has thus welded his followers into unity and rekindled their enthusiasm for his cause in India. It is this power of sacrifice to diffuse feelings in the group and to create esprit de corps that lends such enormous value to the heroic incidents in the lives of martyrs, missionaries, and other crusaders of Christianity, and makes of such incidents among the best of illustrative material for sermons. On the other hand, discipline exercised by the group, as in the case of an army, exalts the common welfare and the common purpose, as over against the will of the individual, in a way which serves also to instil a spirit of loyalty and unity in the group, although such a procedure is dangerous because under some circumstances the sympathy of the group, or a considerable portion of it, may be enlisted on behalf of the member disciplined. Many a congregation suffering to-day from the bitterness of factionalism can trace that factionalism back to a case of congregational discipline.

It is, on the face of it, a curious fact that either

secrecy or publicity may also create and maintain esprit de corps in the group. The organization known as the Ku Klux Klan, which spread through the United States during the years immediately following the World War, is an outstanding example of the effectiveness of secrecy in establishing group morale. And the widespread use of the blue eagle, as the official insignia of President Roosevelt's National Recovery Act of 1933, which was printed in commercial advertisements in the newspapers, pasted on automobile windshields, store windows, and windows of private homes, is a conspicuous example of the power of publicity to accomplish the same end. However, these techniques probably are not as diverse as they appear on the surface to be. For, in addition to whatever factors there may be which are peculiar to each technique, there are some unifying factors which are common to them both. One of these is the consciousness of a common purpose, which is made intense on the one hand by secrecy, and on the other by publicity. Another is the enlargement of the ego in both cases, so that the individual identifies himself with the group, whether through secret signs, "grips", and symbols of other types associated with secrecy, or through widely publicized slogans and insignia. But in either case common group emotions are shared through the process of sympathy.

To some extent in most of the means which have already been mentioned effective use is made of a fifth means which is most significant of all; that is, symbolism. As the

life process of a group continues, there are certain common experiences, usually highly charged with emotion, which of themselves create esprit de corps. In order that the value of these experiences may be conserved in the life of the group, they are incorporated in symbols which may be regarded as a sort of group language. These symbols, like the parts of any language, perform different functions. Some are substantives, standing for different entities of particular significance to the group; others denote action; and still others qualify either substantive or action, or else primarily convey some emotion or feeling. Uniforms, badges, slogans, passwords, titles, colors, and banners are among the typical forms of symbols which are instruments for the creation and maintenance of group morale. The person of the leader himself may, in some organizations, come to have meaning which is symbolic of group loyalty and cohesion. Even leaders of the past may have such symbolic value. While listening over the radio to the proceedings of the national conventions of the two leading political parties in the United States during the summer of 1932, it was observed repeatedly that the Republicans might be stirred to frenzied heights of emotional expression by the mere mention in a speech of the name of Abraham Lincoln, and the Democrats would shout themselves hoarse if a speaker referred to Thomas Jefferson or Woodrow Wilson. And of course, when individual symbols of various types are combined into systems, we have the ritual, the emotional effects

of which have been vividly described by Miss Coyle as follows:

"The use of rhythmical motion, of music, incense, fire, processions, large numbers in simultaneous action, repetition of ceremonial words or chants, of an exclusively ceremonial language, such as the Latin or the Masonic sign-language, have all proved themselves potent instruments of emotional transfer. The decreased sense of individuality produced by uniforms or by uniform action serves to augment the sense of oneness in the group. The lulling of the critical faculties and the heightening of suggestibility by the chants, incense, and candles have always contributed to the emotional fusion of individuals, which, when directed to that end, creates cohesion in the organization."<sup>1</sup>

In all these techniques it is evident that sympathy is an important factor in creating and maintaining what we have called esprit de corps, or group morale. It thus contributes largely to the perpetuation and effective functioning of the organized group as such, making emotionally vivid those traditional elements which are the heritage of Christianity from the past, and helping to make possible the constructive achievements which are the program of Christianity for the future.

#### Some Conditions Which Favour the Sympathetic Response.

In the discussion above, we have necessarily indicated incidentally some of the conditions which favour the sympathetic response. Perhaps it will be well, however, at this point to make a brief summary of the more important of those conditions and to indicate those which have the most direct bearing on homiletics. The first condition favouring the sympathetic response is familiarity, in terms of one's

<sup>1</sup> Social Process in Organized Groups, pp. 144-145.

own experience, with the situation which evokes a sympathetic response. A brother-in-law of the writer was killed while piloting an airship a few years ago. Among the most understanding letters of condolence which came to the mother of that pilot were several which were written by mothers, previously unknown to her, who also had lost sons in aviation accidents and were moved by newspaper accounts to write to her. They were able to share her emotions more fully than were others because they were familiar with her situation in terms of similar experiences of their own. Secondly, love or very close friendship involves an attitude of readiness to react sympathetically to the behaviour of the friend or loved one. This condition is known so universally in experience that illustration or elaboration is unnecessary. Thirdly, uncoerced submissive attitudes render people susceptible to sympathetic responses. Because of his great prestige among his soldiers, it is said that General "Stonewall" Jackson was able in a conspicuous way, just by his confidence of manner, to instil courage in his men in the crisis of battle. Fourthly, the nearer and more vivid the emotional expression the more ready is the sympathetic response to it. The anxiety of the next door neighbour who has just lost his job enlists our sympathy more readily than the newspaper accounts of the plight of millions of other unemployed people throughout the country at large.

Of these four conditions, the first and the last



have the most direct bearing on homiletics. It is not enough in preaching that ideas shall be intelligible and logically convincing, though that is obviously fundamental. But if the whole organism is to react to preaching in anything like the ideally desirable way, the affective side of consciousness, as well as the conative and cognitive aspects, must be stimulated by the sermon. Otherwise the hearers are left understandingly convinced, but coldly unmoved. And, in addition to those techniques which have been discussed above, the most effective means at the disposal of the preacher for stimulating the feelings of his audience is material which is emotionally vivid and which is expressed in terms of emotional experience that is common to the members of the audience. An outstanding instance of this technique comes from Loud's account of Whitefield's preaching in America:

"In another visit to Charleston, Whitefield put the Last Judgment in nautical terms for an audience of seafaring men. His pulpit became the deck of a ship overwhelmed by a tempest.

'Our masts are gone!' he shouted amid the storm he had stirred up. 'The ship is on her beam-ends! What next? What next?'

'The long-boat!' the mariners spontaneously replied. 'Take to the long-boat!'<sup>1</sup>

This is an extreme instance, to be sure, but it serves all the better to make clear that, from the standpoint of the affective side of consciousness, as well as from the standpoint of the cognitive side, the content of sermons should be expressed in terms of experience which is common to the greater portion

1 Loud, G. C., Evangelized America, p. 47. Italics mine.

of the audience.

### The Relation of Sympathy, Imitation, and Suggestion.

Having considered in the last three chapters the mental processes of suggestion, imitation and sympathy, it is desirable, before leaving them, to review briefly their relation to each other. It was evident that the conditions listed above as favouring the sympathetic response are very similar to some of the conditions noted in previous chapters as favouring suggestion and imitation. Moreover, there are other relations between these three mental processes which are either reciprocal or parallel. Most of the ideas which may be diffused through the group by suggestion carry with them an emotional "colouring", or connotation, though it be sometimes strong and sometimes weak. Most, if not all, activities which may be imitated are accompanied by a feeling-tone of pleasantness or unpleasantness, and some by a specific emotion of varying strength. And in the case of conformity imitation of non-personal models, we saw that the border line of suggestion was approached, for non-personal models are ideas. As ideas, they may be communicated by the process of suggestion. But as ideas of action, they are models, the action element of which may be imitated. Again, it is evident that the overt actions of personal models often include, or are, expressions of attitudes which have become habitually associated with certain emotions. In such a case, the reproduction of the perceptible aspect of the attitude is imitation; while

the emotion accompanying the imitation may be induced by sympathy. Thus these processes are seen to be very intimately related to each other. In fact, they are simply aspects of a unified process which may be thus separated for the purpose of analytical study.<sup>1</sup>

This underlying unified process has been variously described as the principle of "ideo-motor action", "ideo-reflex process", and "dynamogenesis". Its exact nature is still a matter of dispute between recognized authorities. But while the psychologists are formulating a generally acceptable statement of the process as a whole, at least it seems valid for those who are concerned primarily with the practical application of social psychology to use suggestion, imitation, and sympathy as descriptive terms to designate the three aspects of a process which is of practical significance in the effort to interpret and control the behaviour of people in group situations such as that of the religious audience. And it has been in that sense that we have used those terms in this paper.

1 Cf. Ginsberg, M., op. cit., p. 27.

"Sermonizing by ministers on social questions, no matter how excellent, is by itself inadequate, if there is not discussion of these sermons by the church members; for effective public opinion is always the co-operative product of the interaction of many individual minds."--C. A. Ellwood.

## CHAPTER VII.

### GROUP THINKING AND THE RELIGIOUS AUDIENCE

Group thinking is not at all a new phenomenon, but it is a social process the significance of which has become more evident with the development of democracy and with the advance of more recent theories of educational psychology. To be sure, the past few years have witnessed much misgiving as to the effectiveness of democracy in politics, and as a result there has been a swing towards dictatorship, such as that of Mussolini in Italy, Hitler in Germany, and Roosevelt in the United States. Likewise, in the spheres of education and of religion there has been a trend in certain circles towards extreme authoritative control and the old sanctions. But these misgivings are not necessarily the fruit of an erroneous philosophy of democracy. Rather, it seems much more likely that they are the product of a faulty technique of democracy. Collective assent has been substituted for collective thinking. The contemporary situation in politics, education, and religion calls for renewed effort to perfect and extend the technique of group thinking in these spheres, so that the democratic ideal may accomplish its purpose in the full development of the personalities of the members of the social group.

#### Six Patterns of Group Thinking.

Miss G. L. Coyle<sup>1</sup> has distinguished six techniques

1 Social Process in Organized Groups, pp. 173-174.

as the most common of the several forms or structural patterns by which collective thinking is carried on. There is the lecture, which represents the typical speaker-audience situation. The forum might be considered simply as a variety of the lecture, but the addition of the opportunity for the members of the audience to question the speaker after his lecture is considered to be of sufficient significance to justify the classification of the forum as a distinct structural form. A third form is the debate, which theoretically is an attempt to solve a problem, but which practically becomes an effort to win a battle, at least in the case of many formal debates. Closely akin to the debate, yet distinct from it in some respects, is parliamentary procedure, in which there may be more general participation on the part of the members of the group. This form is further distinguished from those already mentioned by the fact that the effort of the whole group is engaged in the attempt to solve a common problem and to reach a collective decision through a procedure which has been determined by a rather rigid set of rules. The fifth pattern is that of the problem-solving discussion, which shares with parliamentary procedure its aim and the general participation of the members of the group, but which departs from the structure of parliamentary procedure in ways which will be indicated presently. Finally, there is the informal conversation, the structure of which is very loose and may be a combination of parts of the structures of several forms already mentioned.

While most of these patterns do not obtain in a typical form in the kind of group which is the subject of this paper, at least the patterns of the lecture and the forum are relevant to the religious audience situation, and there are certain elements of the problem-solving discussion and the informal conversation which deserve recognition also.

### The Ideal Pattern of Group Thinking.

The pattern of collective thinking which is considered by many to be the most nearly ideal in terms of its effects on the development of personality is that of the problem-solving discussion. According to Miss Coyle, it was developed in the course of a movement interested in the improvement of the technique of discussion, and it is based chiefly on the educational philosophy of Professor John Dewey, the group theory of Miss Mary Follett, and certain aspects of the Gestalt psychology.<sup>1</sup> In its basic structure, it follows Dewey's five steps in thinking: "(1) a felt difficulty, (2) its location and definition, (3) suggestions of possible solutions, (4) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestions, (5) further observation and experiment leading to acceptance or rejection".<sup>2</sup>

An outstanding exponent of this technique of group discussion is Professor H. S. Elliott. According to his exposition,<sup>3</sup> the first step in group thinking is to get the

<sup>1</sup> Social Process in Organized Groups, footnote, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> How We Think, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> The Process of Group Thinking, Ch. IV.

situation, its central problem and relevant factors, into the open. If common interest in the problem cannot be assumed, then it must be so stated in relation to the various members of the group as to enlist their interest in its solution. In any case, the problem is not to be stated in a merely formal way, but analytically, so that it is seen against a larger background and in terms of its bearing on various situations. Then, having enlisted the interest of the group, and having clarified the significant factors in the problem, the second stage is the examination of the possible courses of action which seem to be real options to the group. In the process of considering the grounds for each of the proposed possible solutions, certain underlying agreements between proposals will become evident. They may be agreements in purpose, goal, values, loyalties, facts, or opinions; but whatever they are in essence, they constitute bonds of unity within the group, and the clear perception of them by the group tends decidedly to facilitate the progress of group thinking. But, along with the discovery of these bonds of agreement, it is almost certain that a number of disagreements will also be revealed. In some cases, the process of real group thinking will cease at this point, for the group will be split into two or more factions, each clinging tenaciously to its own point of disagreement and merely rationalising its own prejudices. However, if the analysis of the problem has been made carefully and thoroughly, and if the group is sufficiently like-minded in its desire to



discover the best possible solution, it is quite possible that the recognition of the points of agreement between the proposed solutions will hold the group together while the differences are explored, clarified, and evaluated. If they prove to be differences of fact, the only thing the group can do is to examine the evidence and reach the best possible conclusions as to what are the facts. More often, however, there are differences of value, or of what is desirable. In the course of the discussion, there is likely to be a modification of the values held by members of the group, or else a new conception of the relative significance of certain values, so that the group as a whole can then agree on a course of action--whether it be one of the proposals originally made or a new proposal which has emerged out of the process of discussing and evaluating agreements and differences. As Professor Elliott has put it, "A conclusion is not necessarily an 'either or'; it may be a 'both and', or it may represent something new born which gathers up and conserves on a higher plane the contribution of all. It is not self plus society, but a developing self in a developing society."<sup>1</sup>

Such, in bare outline, is the normal procedure in the problem-solving discussion. But the process is by no means as simple as such an outline of the procedure might seem to indicate. Among the factors which operate within such a structure and help to determine the issues of group thinking there are at least four which throw further light on the psychology

1 Op. cit., p. 59. Italics mine.

of the process.

The one most immediately perceptible is the nature of the subject matter of the discussion and the relation of the members to it. In part, this factor has already been anticipated in the previous outline of the procedure, when the importance of enlisting the interest of all the members of the group was indicated. The active interest of the group in the problem to be solved may be regarded as a sine qua non of real group thinking. But, in addition to an active interest in the subject, it is equally necessary for the members to have a reasonable amount of information about the subject if they are to contribute anything to the discussion. Otherwise, the so-called group-conclusion is likely to be a matter of assent through ignorance, rather than a progressive integration of thought.

A second factor is the mental and emotional habits of the members of the group. Often such habits will be manifest in the form of conscious and deliberate efforts on the part of some members to confuse the issue or divert the argument. But more frequently the group process will be distorted unconsciously. Accidental associations of certain elements in an individual's experience, or emotionally charged words, may touch off tangents of thought. Certain members will react to people as types, as when all Chinese are thought of in terms of the typical Chinese laundryman in some obscure shop on a back street in an American city. Habits of deference, submis-

siveness to authority, feelings of inferiority or superiority, or attitudes of contempt or loyalty, tend to determine the responses of various members to the discussion. Personal habits of participation affect the course of the discussion also, as in the case of the constant talkers, the silent members, or those who have hobbies which they insist on relating to everything. The treasurer of a church often reacts to the discussion of a particular measure in terms of its possible effect on the income of the church, while the director of religious education responds in terms of the effect on the relations of the young people to the church. In a similar manner, the whole web of each member's habitual interests in other organizations, or in other parts of the same larger organization, tends to govern his participation in the thinking of the group. And among the means of communication, not only do the various denotations and connotations of words among the members often divert the direction of the discussion, or otherwise influence it, but also modulations of the voice, peculiarities of pronunciation, and gestures have their influence. These and other mental and emotional habits must be reckoned with in any process of group thinking.

The composition of the group will also prove to be a factor in the discussion. If the membership is heterogeneous to a considerable degree, diverse thought forms and symbols may make communication relatively difficult. On the other hand, if there is much common experience within the group, there is

likely to be a sort of group language which greatly facilitates the discussion. Established sub-group loyalties may produce factions, or cliques, which interfere with whole-hearted and open-minded participation. A smaller group is likely to feel the pressure of the larger group of which it is a part, as when the attitude of the congregation as a whole obviously colours the judgments expressed by officers in a session meeting.

Closely related to the characteristics of the organization itself is the factor of its interaction with the community in which it functions. Perhaps this factor exerts its strongest influence in a discussion of group policies which will affect the activities of other groups and individuals. A clear example would be the case of a church group discussing a petition to municipal authorities to enforce rigidly an unpopular law with regard to Sabbath observance. The expression of group opinions through resolutions is another form of group-community interaction which may enter into a discussion and determine its course, for usually some members of the group have a fairly accurate idea of what the reaction of the community to certain pronouncements is likely to be. And in a similar manner, of course, the pronouncements of other organizations have their influence in the discussion of group decisions which are related to such pronouncements.

With the vision before us of such factors in constant operation in a group discussion, it is evident that the leader

of such a discussion is in a position of strategic importance. The success of the discussion as a process of real group thinking depends more upon him than upon any other factor. His is the responsibility of seeing that an effective group thinking procedure is followed, that the issues are clearly defined and understood, that possibilities are stated and the real reasons for the consideration of each are felt, that the points of agreement are recognized and points of difference understood and explored, that discussion moves towards an integration of fact and opinion in as united conclusion as possible, that the discussion does not go round in circles but makes genuine progress, that the necessary data for the discussion are supplied in some way, that the progress of the discussion is clearly summarized as the various steps are made, and that the conclusion--if one be possible--is a group conclusion and not the mere surrender of the minority to the majority. Detailed techniques by which these responsibilities may be discharged effectively do not fall within the scope of this paper,<sup>1</sup> but the outline which has been given, both of the factors operating within the structure of the problem-solving discussion and of the responsibilities of the leader of such a discussion, furnishes a desirable background for a briefer description of the structures of the lecture and the forum, and a necessary basis for the consideration of the sermon as a pattern of group thinking.

1 These are treated fully by Elliott, opus cit., Ch. V.

### The Lecture and Forum as Patterns of Group Thinking.

On first thought, it might not appear that the lecture could be legitimately called a pattern of group thinking. Yet it is quite possible for the development of the thought in the lecture to follow the five steps which were outlined as the steps characterizing the problem-solving discussion. Moreover, if the lecturer is familiar with his audience, and if in the preparation of the lecture he fairly presents the questions and the diverse points of view which would be expressed by members of the audience in a discussion group, the lecture still further partakes of the nature of group discussion. And if to such a lecture there is added the forum element, so that there is an opportunity for the members of the audience to ask questions of the lecturer, then assuredly we have a pattern of group thinking of a relatively high order.

Now, so far as the participation of the group in the thinking process is concerned, there is no essential difference between the lecture and the sermon. From that standpoint, the lecture and the sermon may be regarded as synonymous. Likewise, the essential idea of the forum can be carried over from the lecture-forum to the sermon-forum. The sermon-forum would then be a discussion period following the preaching of the sermon, in which the members of the audience would have an opportunity to ask questions of the preacher concerning the theme upon which he had preached.

### Group Thinking as Applied to the Sermon.

To what extent may these structures of the sermon and of the sermon-forum be considered patterns of group thinking? In the case of the sermon, at least, it appears on first thought that the term group thinking must be stretched considerably in order that it may apply to the sermon at all. For in the sermon situation the preacher has a monopoly on the oral expression of thought. He is in a position of recognized authority. In a large measure he directs the attention of the rest of the group. There is no opportunity for interruption, for questions, for the expression of diverse opinions, for the presentation of any relevant data which he does not possess, but which is in the hands of other members of the group. In other words, the audience performs a comparatively passive function. All these obvious facts must be admitted, and the conclusion is justified that group thinking does not reach the high plane in the sermon situation that it reaches in the problem-solving discussion.

But it must also be remembered that the mind of man is not to be thought of as a mere tabula rasa. No audience is entirely passive. Its members may not be able to ask questions orally, but questions are nevertheless raised in their minds. Moreover, if the group is composed of members who know each other well, one individual may even anticipate with considerable accuracy some of the questions which are being raised in the minds of other individuals, and those

questions become a part of his thinking response to the sermon. Furthermore, words in oral form are not the only means of communication. The raised eyebrow, the nod of agreement, the nod of disagreement, the frown of perplexity--these, and other gestures among the audience, modify the responses of the audience to the speaker. And, if the speaker is not too engrossed in the mechanics of reading a manuscript, or of recalling what has been memorized verbatim, it is not likely that he will fail in some way to respond to these communications from the audience--here by clarifying an ambiguous statement, there by answering a question; here by elaborating an argument, there by noting an exception.

But, in addition to these factors of group thinking which operate in the sermon situation at the point of the delivery of the sermon, there are also factors which operate at the point of the preparation of the sermon. The position of the preacher who is preparing a sermon is not entirely unlike that of the leader who is preparing to act as chairman of a problem-solving discussion. The preacher is not only a spokesman to the group; he is also a spokesman of the group. As such, he must give recognition to his representative capacity in the preparation of the sermon. There is nothing to prevent his use of the same structural pattern that is used by the leader who is outlining the procedure for a problem-solving discussion. And to the extent that the preacher knows the members of his group and approaches the problem of



the sermon fairly, clearly, and sympathetically from their various points of view--to that extent, at least, the sermon, even in its prepared form, is a piece of group thinking.

The more usual homiletical procedure, especially in the preaching of topical sermons, is one which is fundamentally deductive in its treatment, and therefore somewhat far removed from the pattern which would seem to be best adapted to group thinking. A text is first chosen from the Bible. The central thought of that text is described or suggested in the "subject", or "title", which is given the sermon. The theme, or thesis, of the sermon is stated in a concise declarative sentence which is usually called the "proposition". Then that proposition is supported by several lines of argument, or else its practical applications to various phases of life are made, in the several divisions which constitute the "body", or "discussion", of the sermon. In the conclusion, the various points of the discussion are summarized, and perhaps an appeal, based on the discussion of the proposition, is made to the audience.

However, while it is perhaps valid to say that this deductive procedure is the more typical one, the inductive approach which characterizes the procedure of the problem-solving discussion is not entirely novel to homiletics. The five steps outlined by Elliott as the stages in the technique of group thinking may be used, and have been used for a long time, by preachers as one of several methods of arranging and

presenting the material in sermons--especially sermons which are topical, rather than textual, in their arrangement, and more particularly in the case of those topical sermons which are apologetic and those which are ethical in their material.

In such a case, the subject of the sermon might most appropriately be indicated in the form of a question. The text might be read, but no weight would be put upon it at first. Likewise, no declarative statement of a proposition would be made at the beginning of the sermon. Rather, the preacher would begin by describing as interestingly as possible some aspects of contemporary life which indicate very clearly that there is a keenly felt difficulty confronting men and women. As a second step, he would locate and define that difficulty, probably citing some typical examples of it. In the third place, he would enumerate the possible solutions of the problem, or at any rate the several possible ways in which men may respond to the problem. Among those ways, of course, would be that one which the preacher believes to be the Christian way. When, among these possible ways, the Christian way has been shown to be the most desirable, it is stated in the form of a proposition, which is shown to be the essential thought of the text of the sermon, and its adoption, as a working basis of life, is then advocated in a concluding appeal.

Certain details in this procedure might be varied somewhat, of course, but fundamentally the steps in the thought process would be the same as those indicated by Elliott

for the problem-solving discussion. And to the extent that the preacher, in his development of the sermon, presented the thoughts and various points of view of different members of the audience; to the extent that he presented his reasoning in terms which the audience could appreciate, so that they were really thinking with him, and not just passively accepting his conclusions; to that extent such a sermon might legitimately be called a piece of group thinking.

It is the contention of some contemporary writers in the field of homiletics that such an inductive approach in preaching is necessary in order to reach the "modern mind". Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, for example, has stated the case for it at some length, as follows:

"As a matter of strategy, if for no other reason, the new preaching must be inductive in its emphasis and approach. Inevitably so, because the whole spirit and method of thought in our day is inductive, and if we are to win the men of to-day to the truths of faith we must use the method by which they find truth in other fields. In the old days the text was a truth assumed to be true, and the preacher only needed to expound its meaning, deduce its lessons, and apply them. Often enough a text was a tiny peg from which a vast weight of theology depended, and so long as men accepted both the text and the theology all went well....But in an age of inquiry, when the authority of the Bible and the Church is questioned by so many, such an appeal does not carry conviction. We may wish it otherwise, but we must face the facts and be wise enough to win men on their own terms, remembering that we are persuaders, not soldiers, fishers of men and not mere critics. Also, if by appeal to the facts of life we can show the truths of faith to be real, we have reestablished the authority of the Bible and the Church.

The inductive method is indispensable in teaching the genetic truths of faith, doubly so in an age when a spongy texture of mind deplores all dogma and loves disembodied ideas that float in va-

pory phrases in the air, binding us to nothing positive. None the less....we must have a theology....else our faith will evaporate in a misty sentiment....But it asks for a fine strategy to make such a deep truth as the Trinity real to the mind of our day....If stated as sheer dogma, it wears the aspect of an arid formula, a queer mixture of mysticism, metaphysics, and mathematics, as empty as it is unreal. But if treated inductively, it is unveiled as one of the basic thought-forms of the mind of man in its attempt to interpret the life of God....

For some time I have been discussing the matter of inductive preaching with my English friends in letters....One of them sent me an example of an inductive sermon so admirable that I venture to pass it along. The preacher wished to make a plea for single-heartedness in the service of God, taking for his text the words of Jesus, 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon'. Had he used the old method, he would have stated the truth of the text as a proposition and gone straight to his deductions, but he would not have carried his hearers with him. Many men to-day, as all will agree, are unconvinced that such a double service is impossible....The preacher may have the tongue of an angel, but he will not win men in that way who question the truth of his text at the outset.

By the inductive approach it is different; it puts no weight on the text at first, but begins with near-by facts familiar to all, using popular illustrations. Is it not true that in factory life fatigue and weariness are common? Why? The mind is divided. In the same way, hours spent in pursuing a hobby--growing roses, say--even produces freshness of mind. Why? There is single-hearted enjoyment in the work. 'Why, this is true!' is the unspoken verdict; the truth of the text is approved, not only as upon divine authority, but as a truth of experience. Having led his hearers on a tour of exploration, the preacher may now skillfully use a sense of intellectual satisfaction as an opportunity to create a deep sense of spiritual dissatisfaction. Such a method seems to be the best in an age which has a peculiar bent toward discovery; and for the presentation of difficult or unpopular truth it is invaluable. It is a flank attack on the fortifications of prejudice, its most striking virtue being its element of surprise."<sup>1</sup>

1 The New Preaching, pp. 139-143.

Dr. Newton follows this exposition of the inductive approach in preaching with the observation that Jesus himself was inductive in his approach, especially in speaking to the stranger, the doubter, and the sinner, and that the modern preacher cannot do better than adopt this strategy.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to this inductive approach in preaching, three observations may be made. First, to the extent that it is desirable for the thought process of sermons to conform as nearly as possible to the group-thinking pattern of the problem-solving discussion, it seems valid to say that this method of arranging and presenting the materials in sermons is the best. Secondly, there is little doubt that a large portion of the people who constitute religious audiences today are quite sceptical in their attitude towards the orthodox tenets of the Christian religion. They are not willing to assume that because a text comes from the Bible, it is therefore true, and that the preacher's only task is to expound its meaning and apply its lessons. This is especially true of university students and of the upper classes of society in general. And the preacher can ill afford to ignore a method of preaching which is calculated to enlist their interest and to persuade them to Christian belief and conduct. But, thirdly, there still remain the multitudes of more simple folk who require primarily the explication and application of Christian doctrine. And it is still true that the greater problem of the minister in his preaching is not to

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., pp. 143-144.

convince audiences of the truth of those Christian teachings towards which they are sceptical, but to move them to act upon those teachings the truth of which they admit, but towards the practical implications of which they are passively indifferent. And even among the sceptical and sophisticated there is good reason to believe that many would welcome in the sermons they hear the note of authority which is more characteristic of the deductive than of the inductive approach. As Professor Vinet has aptly expressed it,

"The tone of true authority....is welcome to almost all men. Favour is assured beforehand to the men, who, in this world of inconstancy and perplexity, express themselves on a grave subject with conviction, and authority. This is even the first thing that strikes in an orator, and conciliates attention to him, especially when we see that he draws all his authority from his message, and not from himself, and that he is as modest as he is convinced. What was it that astonished the Jewish people in the doctrine of Jesus Christ? was it this doctrine itself? It was especially the authority with which Jesus Christ professed it: 'For He taught', says St. Mathew, 'as one having authority, and not as the scribes'."1

And so we conclude that, while this inductive approach in preaching undoubtedly offers the contemporary minister a very useful variety, it by no means merits the enthusiasm which would incline one to displace with it all other methods of preaching.

#### Group Thinking and the Sermon-Forum.

We have seen that, without doing violence to the meaning of group thinking, the sermon, under certain circum-

1 Homiletics, pp. 197-198.

stances, may be legitimately considered to be one structural form of that social process, though as a form of group thinking it does not normally approach the high plane of the well-conducted problem-solving discussion. Something in that direction is gained, however, when to the structure of the inductive sermon situation there is added that of the forum. Perhaps the term "added" is somewhat misleading, for in this case there is not merely an addition of something without a significant modification of that to which an addition is made. It is not unreasonable to assume that the response of members of an audience to a sermon would be more critical and reflective when they knew there was to be an opportunity for asking questions later, than when there was no such anticipation. And it is not improbable that the preacher's care and thoroughness in the preparation of sermons, as well as his alertness to subtle responses in the course of delivery, would be increased by the forum-factor.

Besides these effects, however, the forum structure facilitates group thinking by affording the opportunity for asking questions which could not be communicated either to the speaker or to other members of the audience by mere facial expressions. And, as one question or its answer raises another, the whole course of the thinking of the group may be turned in a new direction, lifted to a higher level, or otherwise guided towards a different conclusion. Of course, primarily the forum affords an opportunity for the elucidation

of what has already been said in the sermon. Yet when it is remembered how easily new data may be introduced through a question, or how readily a whole train of positive argument may be implied by a question, it is evident that the forum makes possible a type of thinking which at least approaches in value the group thinking of the problem-solving discussion.

In his book entitled What is Christian Education?, Professor G. A. Coe implies that present techniques of preaching, from the standpoint of Christian education, are practically a failure. As he visualizes the preaching of the future,<sup>1</sup> it will be very much after the form of the sermon-forum, or the problem-solving discussion. The sermon itself will be designed primarily to present facts and clarify issues with regard to moral and religious problems. The period which follows the sermon will then be devoted to a free discussion of the possible solutions of the problem, with a view to reaching some collective belief or course of action which will represent, not mere passive assent, and not the unwilling surrender of the minority, but a sort of synthetic conclusion which is the product of the interactions of the various minds in the group as they think together.

It must be granted that the normal sermon situation is not calculated to produce in the group the vigorous thinking, the clear understanding, and the strong volition that may be produced in the forum or the group discussion. What Professor Drever has said of collective teaching in the class-

1 Pp. 214-225.



room is equally true of preaching in the usual way, when viewed from an educational standpoint; it "tends to produce the type of mind which we call 'flabby', with a lack of initiative and independence of thought."<sup>1</sup> The chief reason for this result, as Dr. Drever points out, is that the group functions largely at the perceptive level.

It seems, therefore, highly desirable that, with certain types of topics, the forum element, if not also the problem-solving discussion, be added to the sermon. This technique might be of inestimable value in considering Christian attitudes, policies, and practices in relation to such subjects as war and peace between nations, the race question, certain industrial problems, and the like. It has been found to be very profitable by a number of ministers who have tried it with their congregations on certain occasions. But that this procedure should entirely displace the normal technique, so that the minister becomes just a glorified chairman of an ecclesiastical seminar, is well nigh inconceivable. As an integral part of an order of worship, and not merely an instrument for the education of the religious audience, there is still room for sermons which are neither inductive in their treatment nor of the nature of introductory lectures to forums or group discussions.

1 Op. cit., p. 219.

"Mind is an organic whole made up of cooperating individualities, in somewhat the same way that the music of an orchestra is made up of divergent but related sounds. No one would think it necessary or reasonable to divide the music into two kinds, that made by the whole and that of particular instruments, and no more are there two kinds of mind, the social mind and the individual mind. When we study the social mind we merely ~~fix~~ our attention on larger aspects and relations rather than on the narrower ones of ordinary psychology."--C. H. Cooley.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE GROUP MIND AND THE RELIGIOUS AUDIENCE

In his Yale lectures on preaching, Dr. Charles E. Jefferson makes a protest that embodies a view of the religious audience which we are to consider in this chapter. He says,

"Some ministers take hold of a church as though it were a lump of putty or a piece of wood to be shaped at their will. They do not give it credit for having a soul of its own. They begin at once to reorganize it....The new minister does not know that the church has a disposition and temperament of its own, that its personality is as distinct and solid as his, that it is an organism with traditions which are sacred and customs which are hallowed, with notions and whims that must be respected, and with idiosyncrasies which cannot safely be ignored."<sup>1</sup>

What Dr. Jefferson and many others have noted with regard to a religious congregation has been observed also with regard to many other varieties of groups. We speak frequently of such groups as families, universities, clubs, tribes, nations, and races as if they were organisms with capacities of thinking, feeling, and willing as units. Cartoonists portray Great Britain as "John Bull", and America as "Uncle Sam", and both of them have rather definite mental characteristics which personify the respective groups they represent.

#### The Place of the Group Mind in Social Psychology.

While such popular ways of regarding groups have

1 The Building of the Church, p. 13. Italics mine.

been condemned by some social psychologists<sup>1</sup> as mere "glittering generalities" which are of no scientific value, by others they have been taken seriously as a cue to a valid approach to the psychological study of social groups. Such studies have made familiar the concept of the "group mind", although the meaning of that concept is by no means standardized, and the validity of it can hardly be considered established among the majority of reputable psychologists. Professor E. D. Martin contends that if the concept of a group mind is valid, then social psychology should give its whole attention to the analysis and description of the mind of the particular group being studied. But, after a scathing criticism of the concept in one of its interpretations,<sup>2</sup> he concludes that

"this group mind either means that there is a psychological entity which is exclusive of individual psyches and yet includes them, or it means that for certain purposes individual differences may be ignored and we may speak of collective behaviour as the behaviour of the collectivity. In the first case, the group mind is a mystical concept, and in the second it is tautological."<sup>3</sup>

Of course, if the concept is not valid, it should be dismissed, though one feels that it deserves a more sympathetic consideration than Dr. Martin has given it. But if it is valid, Dr. Martin's conclusion does not necessarily follow, that "social psychology should give its whole attention to the analysis and description of the mind of the par-

1 Dunlap, K., in Psychologies of 1925, p. 363, for example.

2 That of McDougall, in The Group Mind.

3 Psychology, p. 182.

ticular group being studied". There is value in the study of the social aspects of individual behaviour in the group situation, and there is value in the study of the behaviour of the group viewed as a unit. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive; the one supplements the other.<sup>1</sup> And, while for some purposes it may be desirable to take one approach rather than the other, for our purpose it has seemed most profitable to emphasize the first approach, as we have done in the foregoing chapters, but also to consider briefly in this chapter the religious audience from the point of view of the group mind.

#### Representative Meanings of the Group Mind.

As was intimated above, even among the writers who consider the group mind to be a valid concept for social psychology, the meanings of the term and the methods of its study are not uniform. It will, therefore, clear the ground for our use of the term if we consider briefly three representative meanings and methods of study<sup>2</sup>--those of Durkheim, Wundt, and McDougall.

M. Émile Durkheim and M. Lévy-Bruhl are the outstanding representatives of an important French school of

1 Cf. McDougall, Op. cit., Preface to the second American edition, pp. x-xi.

2 S. Freud, in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, presents a fourth interpretation which is distinctive, but which we are omitting from consideration on two grounds: (1) He has confused the normal group with the psychological crowd to such an extent that a very lengthy discussion would be required in order merely to clarify that confusion, and (2) Criticism of his interpretation of the group mind would involve a criticism of the fundamental concepts of his whole system of psychology--a task of too wide a scope for us to undertake here, and one which has been recently done by Principal Hughes in his book The New Psychology and Religious Experience.

social psychology, the chief organ of which is L'Année Sociologique. While they represent fundamentally the same point of view,<sup>1</sup> we shall confine ourselves to a consideration of Durkheim's treatment of the group mind. The key word in his system is "representations", which are of two kinds--individual and collective. In the individual, sensations are the ultimate constituents of all mental states and mental structures. Sensations are compounded with other existing sensations to form images, which are purely psychic. Images, in turn, compound to form concepts, and concepts to form representations, which are the most important constituents of the individual mind. But in the group, two or more of these individual representations are capable of combining into a synthesis which he calls "collective representations". However, such a fusion of individual representations is not the most important means of creating collective representations. For once collective representations are thus formed, they oppose, destroy, or fuse with one another, producing a still higher type of purely collective representation. An organization of collective representations, then, would constitute the group mind, the importance of which is indicated by Durkheim when he writes:

"Collective representations are the result of an immense co-operation, which stretch-

<sup>1</sup> Lévy-Bruhl's best known works in social psychology are Les Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inférieures and La Mentalité Primitive. Excellent criticisms of his distinctive views are to be found in Webb, C. C. J., Group Theories of Religion and the Individual, especially Ch. II; and Bartlett, F. C., Psychology and Primitive Culture, pp. 282-287.

es out not only into space but into time as well; to make them, a multitude of minds have associated, united and combined their ideas and sentiments; for them, long generations have accumulated their experience and their knowledge. A special intellectual activity is therefore concentrated in them which is infinitely richer and complexer than that of the individual. From that one can understand how the reason has been able to go beyond the limits of empirical knowledge. It does not owe this to any vague mysterious virtue but simply to the fact that according to the well-known formula, man is double. There are two beings in him; an individual being which has its foundation in the organism and the circle of whose activities is therefore strictly limited, and a social being which represents the highest reality in the intellectual and moral order that we can know by observation--I mean society....In so far as he belongs to society, the individual transcends himself, both when he thinks and when he acts."<sup>1</sup>

Thus it appears that, in Durkheim's view, mind is not so much a substance, or structure, as rather a body of impressions, ideas, or "representations". The individual mind consists of two areas, one of which comprises the representations of the individual as such, the other being composed of the individual's knowledge of collective representations. Because of their wider scope in time and space, and because of their position at the top of the psychic hierarchy, these collective representations are greatly superior to individual representations,<sup>2</sup> and in their organized form, as

1 The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, pp. 16-17.

2 In the extreme place given to the group in the determination of the behaviour of the individual, Durkheim's position is comparable to that set forth by R. H. Wheeler in his eight "organismic laws": (1) Law of field properties: The whole is more than the sum of its parts; it possesses properties and exhibits behaviour which its parts, taken alone, do not exhibit. (2) Law of derived properties: Parts derive their properties from the whole. (3) Law of determined action: The whole governs the activities of its parts. (4) Law of indi-

the group mind, they are the primary material of social psychology.

Professor Wilhelm Wundt's magnum opus on the group mind was his five-volume work, Folk Psychology. The fundamental differences between it and his later work, Elements of Folk Psychology, are two. The first work is a more exhaustive and analytical study in which he has taken what he calls "longitudinal sections" of community life, such as language, art, religion, etc., and traced the development of each in turn from its earliest appearance.<sup>1</sup> The second work is not only less exhaustive, but it is also developed by a different method of study, based on the first work. Instead of taking "longitudinal sections" of community life and tracing them in their historical development as if each had developed in isolation from the others, he takes "transverse sections" and traces the development of such social phenomena as language, art and religion, in their inter-relations.<sup>2</sup> Thus he finds four such "transverse sections", or periods, which he studies--"primitive man", "the totemic age", "the age of heroes and gods", and the "development to humanity".

viduation: Parts emerge from wholes through a process of individuation. (5) Law of field genesis: In the process of evolution wholes evolve as wholes. (6) Law of least action: A body moves toward its remote end over the shortest route in time when energy is multiplied by time. (7) Law of maximum work: An energy system resists the disturbing influences of outside forces. (8) Law of configuration: Any reaction of the human organism as a whole is a unified response to a total situation of some kind. If the response is directed specifically toward a detail of the total situation it is always made to that detail in its relation to other details. Readings in Psychology, pp. 7-22.

<sup>1</sup> Elements of Folk Psychology, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 7.



Wundt seems to agree with Durkheim in considering mind in general as an aggregation, or combination, of psychic processes and psychic states, rather than as a substance in which psychic states inhere. But when he speaks of a group mind, he does not mean that the word "mind" is being used in exactly the same sense as in the expression "the individual mind". It is a conception which is looser in some respects, and more detailed in others. It leaves out of account all the individual conscious states which reflect the condition of individual bodies; but it includes the special conditions and properties which result from the collective living of many individuals. The conception of the group mind is especially characterized by the fact that it envisages the psychic continuity of the group without reference to the continual perishing and replacement of the individual persons whose psychic states and processes supply the volume of the collective psychic stream.

But, while Wundt and Durkheim agree in defining mind as a sum, or combination, of psychic processes and products, Durkheim's conception is achieved by a more abstract development than Wundt's. As we saw, Durkheim's group mind is an organization of representations--primarily an intellectual concept. In Wundt's conception, however, there is no exclusive emphasis on ideation as the process or product constituting the group mind. He concentrates on speech, myth, and custom as the chief external deposits and products of the collective

mind's representations, feelings, and will, respectively. To him these are the proper materials for the study of the group mind of a community of any kind.

In his conception of the relation between the psychology of the group and the psychology of the individual, we may let Wundt speak for himself:

"Thus, then, in the analysis of the higher mental processes, folk psychology is an indispensable supplement to the psychology of individual consciousness. Indeed, in the case of some questions the latter already finds itself obliged to fall back on the principles of folk psychology. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that just as there can be no folk community apart from individuals who enter into reciprocal relations within it, so also does folk psychology, in turn, presuppose individual psychology, or, as it is usually called, general psychology. The former, however, is an important supplement to the latter, providing principles for the interpretation of the more complicated processes of individual consciousness."<sup>1</sup>

Professor McDougall protests against the procedure of attempting to arrive at an understanding of the individual by studying first the nature of society and then the influence of society upon him, as if the human organism were at birth the tabula rasa which Locke postulated. Rather, he contends that man is "an organism with strong inborn tendencies which lead him not only to conform to social pressures, but also to react against them, to struggle to preserve his unique individuality in spite of all they can do".<sup>2</sup> Dr. McDougall's Introduction to Social Psychology was the practical expression of this conviction, for in that work he des-

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The Group Mind, preface to second Amer. ed., p. xi.

cribes the innate constitution of man as a foundation for his later work, The Group Mind. But he recognizes that the group cannot be fully and accurately interpreted in terms only of the psychology of the individuals composing it. For, by virtue of its past history, the group as such has positive qualities which it does not derive from the units which compose it at any one time, and it therefore acts upon its units in a way that is very different from the way in which the units themselves interact with one another. Moreover, by becoming a member of the group, each unit displays modes of reaction which it does not display as long as it remains outside that group. As he himself expresses it,

"The society has a mental life which is not the mere sum of the mental lives of its units existing as independent units; and a complete knowledge of the units, if and in so far as they could be known as isolated units, would not enable us to deduce the nature of the life of the whole, in the way that is implied by Spencer's analogies."<sup>1</sup>

Thus Dr. McDougall would avoid the two extremes of attempting either to interpret the individual entirely in terms of society, or to interpret society entirely in terms of the individual.<sup>2</sup>

Mind is defined by him as "an organized system of mental or purposive forces; and, in the sense so defined ev-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> "We must study society, and also the individual in abstraction from society; and then we must study the interplay between society and individual; in that way, and in that way only, can we hope to arrive at an understanding of group life as a constant interplay between the group mind and the minds of the individual." Ibid., preface to second Amer. ed., p. xi.

ery highly organized human society may properly be said to possess a collective mind."<sup>1</sup>

McDougall agrees with both Wundt and Durkheim in denying independent substantiality to the group mind, although each of them speaks of the group mind at times as if it were some tertium quid, some mystical entity, which exists apart from, and independent of, the minds of the individuals composing the group. But that McDougall's concept is not that of a separate and independent entity could not be made clearer than when he writes:

"The group mind and the developed individual mind are correlatives; neither can exist without the other; and the group mind exists only within the various individual minds and is in each one in so far as the structure of each one has been moulded by the life of the group. Each member of the group so moulded bears within him some part of the group mind, some socially moulded mental structure which is a part of the total structure of the group mind. And the total activity of the group mind is the interplay of all these mutually adjusted parts."<sup>2</sup>

#### Evaluation of These Representative Meanings in Relation to the Purpose of this Paper.

The chief difference between the three conceptions of the group mind which we have thus briefly summarized is a difference of emphasis which leads each author to a different method of study. In Durkheim's view, we have seen that the chief emphasis is on the cognitive aspect of group life--

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 13. This definition of mind has been severely criticized by R. M. Maciver, E. D. Martin, and others. The more serious of these criticisms, we think, are quite adequately answered by Dr. McDougall in a lengthy discussion on pages 13-28 of the second American edition of his book.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., preface to second Amer. ed., p. xi. Italics mine.

ideation. Hence, his method is to study the origin and development of "collective representations" in group life. In Dr. McDougall's view, the emphasis is primarily on the conative aspect. Consequently, in his study more attention is given to the ways in which groups act.<sup>1</sup> In Wundt's view, cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of group life seem to receive about equal emphasis, but because he restricts himself to the study of the products, or deposits, of collective life, his method is adapted only to the study of groups which have had a long existence, such as tribes or nations, or to the study of very sharply differentiated contemporary groups on the basis of relatively meagre mental products as materials.

From the point of view, then, of our study of the typical religious audience, it would be necessary for a specific audience, or congregation, to be designated before any profitable study could be made of its group mind. In that case, the method of Durkheim would yield valuable clues as to the ideas, the beliefs, the concepts of a particular congregation, most of which it would be found to share with other congregations of the same denomination, nationality, and race. The method of Wundt would be profitable in studying the culture of the race, the nationality, the sect, and perhaps certain aspects of the culture of the particular community in which the congregation was located. But, on the whole, Dr. McDougall's

<sup>1</sup> It should be stated explicitly that neither Durkheim nor McDougall entirely omits from consideration in his study of the group mind the other aspects of psychological processes. It is intended here only to indicate their respective points of emphasis.

method appears to be decidedly the most valuable one for the preacher to attempt to use in the study of the group mind of a particular congregation, for, though it be valid to say that he emphasizes the conative aspects of the group mind, he certainly recognizes the significance of group sentiments, symbols, customs, and traditions.

Since our purpose in studying the group mind is primarily pragmatic, we may join Dr. McDougall in his pragmatic justification of his concept of the group mind<sup>1</sup> and indicate somewhat more in detail the significance of the group mind of a religious congregation to the preacher, the more important aspects of it which he needs to study, and some further bearings of the group mind on his preaching.

#### Conditions of the Formation of a Group Mind.

While it is probably true that the rudiments of a group mind are present in any human group whose members have anything at all in common which could be called mental, for a group mind to be formed which is of much practical significance, three conditions must be fulfilled. There must be a common object of mental activity, a common mode of feeling, and some degree of reciprocal influence between the members of the group.<sup>2</sup> These conditions, as we shall see in the next chapter, are necessary even for the formation of a psychological crowd.

1 "In this book it will be maintained that the conception of a group mind is useful and therefore valid." Op. cit., pp. 11-12.

2 Ibid., p. 33.

In addition to those essential conditions of any collective mental activity, there are at least five other conditions which are of great importance in raising collective mental action above the level of the unorganized crowd, and which make possible the formation of a group mind which is of real significance. The basic condition is some degree of continuity of existence.<sup>1</sup> It may be material continuity, with the same individuals constituting the group during a relatively long period of time; or, it may be formal continuity, with the various positions in the organization of the group continuing while the membership in the group is changing. In most highly organized groups both forms will be present to a high degree. Both are present in the congregation as a group, but the extent to which they vary in different congregations has an observable effect on the group minds of those congregations which is of concern to the minister. A congregation in a relatively stable community is most likely to have a group mind which is decidedly conservative and resistant to changes of doctrine or custom, because it is a group with a high degree of both material and formal continuity. On the other hand, a congregation in an industrial centre, such as an American railroad town, while it will have formal continuity, is likely not to have a high degree of material continuity. The lay membership of the group is transient. The personnel of the group is constantly changing. And there may even be a different minister every two or three years.

1 Op. cit., p. 69.

The significance of these varying degrees of formal and material continuity becomes still more evident in its relation to the second condition--"that in the minds of the mass of the members of the group there shall be formed some adequate idea of the group, of its nature, composition, functions, and capacities, and of the relations of the individuals to the group".<sup>1</sup> It is the fulfilment of this condition which chiefly fosters the development of a strong sentiment for the group, without which the group itself cannot function most efficiently. In the case of a congregation, however, not only must the efficiency of the group be kept in mind as an end to be achieved, but also the effect of the group sentiments on the characters of the individual members. It does not always mean the same thing, in terms of the building of Christian character, to say that the members of a certain congregation have a strong sentiment of loyalty to the church. Much depends upon the idea of the church which is the object of that sentiment of loyalty. And, in view of the relatively large number of sermons which the minister preaches, or should preach, with a view to building up in the members of the congregation Christian sentiments for the group (the koinonia), it behoves him to have regard, not merely for the efficiency of the group as such (in the amount of contributions, regularity of attendance on services, etc.), but also for the effect of such group sentiments on the developing Christian characters of the members.

1 Op. cit., p. 69.



A third condition favourable to the development of a group mind is "the interaction (especially in the form of conflict and rivalry) of the group with other similar groups animated by different traditions and customs".<sup>1</sup> It is doubtful whether this should be considered as a separate condition, coordinate with the others, or whether it is merely one specific means of fulfilling the second condition mentioned above, for its chief significance in relation to the group mind is that it produces in the group a more sharply defined self-knowledge and a stronger self-sentiment. Nevertheless, it is a condition which is worthy of being noted.

The preaching of polemic sermons immediately appears to be one of the most effective means at the disposal of the preacher for fulfilling this condition. But, while this is not the place for a general discussion of polemic sermons,<sup>2</sup> it may be said that usually the values which controversial preaching contributes to the group mind of a congregation are neutralized by the distorted conceptions of, and the ill feelings towards, the rival group, or groups, against which such sermons are preached. Ideals, purposes, customs, and traditions which the rival groups have in common are frequently neglected in such sermons, and relatively minor differences are magnified out of their due proportion. By this means a more vigorous and wilful group mind may be formed, to be sure, but

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Very sane general discussions of polemic sermons are to be found in Broadus, Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, pp. 65-67; Johnson, Ideal Ministry, pp. 353-354; Vinet, Homiletics, pp. 57-59; and Hardman, O. (Ed.), Psychology and the Church, pp. 169-172.

there is real danger that it may not be such as could be called "the mind of Christ".

The fourth and fifth conditions may best be treated together in their relation to preaching. They are, first, "the existence of a body of traditions and customs and habits in the minds of the members of the group determining their relations to one another and to the group as a whole", and secondly, "the organization of the group, consisting in the differentiation and specialization of the functions of its constituents--the individuals and classes or groups of individuals within the group."<sup>1</sup>

It will be recalled that in Chapter II the religious audience was classified as a "mixed group", there being in it elements both purposive and traditional. Whether these two elements are proportionately represented in the group mind of a particular congregation will depend largely upon three factors.

To some extent, the nature of the organization itself will tend to determine the character of the group mind in this respect. One has but to observe the contrasts between a Roman Catholic congregation and an American "left-wing" Unitarian congregation to realize the significance of this factor. In the one case every provision is made in the organization for the perpetuation of traditional customs, while in the other the organization is designed primarily for the emphasis of the purposive elements in religion, with little concern for the traditional.

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 70.

But even within the same type of formal organization, one congregation may be predominantly traditional in its mental characteristics, while another is primarily purposive, because of the differences between the individual lay leaders who hold positions of influence in the respective organizations. In this manner, it is quite possible, and frequently observable, that two congregations in the same community, and of the same denomination, may have very different group minds, while functioning through practically identical formal organizations.

Of more influence, perhaps, than either of these factors is the minister himself. By his choice and treatment of sermon subjects, by his conduct of public worship, by his administration of sacraments, and by his influence in the administration of the affairs of the congregation, in countless ways he helps to determine whether the mind of the group shall be one which is primarily traditional, primarily purposive, or a proportionately blended mixture of the two.

Thus is linked up with the minister's part in the formation of a group mind in the congregation a tendency which was pointed out at the end of Chapter III--the tendency of ministers to conform either to the prophetic or to the priestly type. And all the more evident, in light of our discussion above, should be the desirability of a minister's combining, not only in his sermons, but also in his whole personality and in every aspect of his ministerial leadership, the spirit and functions of both prophet and priest.

## The Affective Aspect of the Group Mind.

In discussing the place of sympathy in the religious audience (Chapter VI), we considered briefly the significance of the group spirit in the religious audience and indicated five means of creating and maintaining esprit de corps--the employment of common interests clothed in the robes of the ideal, conflict and rivalry, discipline and self-sacrifice, secrecy or publicity, and symbolism. We saw then what are some of the effects of the group spirit on the character of the individual, and how, through the process of sympathy, the affective aspect of the experience of group members is diffused through the group.

Viewing the religious audience as a unit, and thinking in terms of the group mind, it becomes evident now that these diffused feelings constitute the affective aspect of the group mind. When these common feelings are organized about some object, or idea, we then have what we may call a collective sentiment. And when the object of such a sentiment is the group itself, there is formed that part of the group mind which is of paramount importance both to the group as a unit, and to the individuals composing it. For it is no mere fanciful analogy to say that what sentiments are to the character and behaviour of the individual, collective sentiments are to the character and behaviour of the group. When there is an emotionally charged idea of the whole which is present to the mind of each member, there is created a "we" feeling which is product-

tive of loyalty to the group. McDougall has described its significance to an army<sup>1</sup> and to savage life.<sup>2</sup> Canon Raven has indicated its effect on a battalion on the eve of action.<sup>3</sup> On its relation to the religious congregation, Jefferson has devoted the larger part of his Yale lectures on preaching.<sup>4</sup>

As Dr. McDougall has so clearly pointed out, the group spirit is the great socializing agency which raises the conduct of the individual above the plane of pure egoism and motivates him to "think and care and work for others as well as for himself".<sup>5</sup> The self-regarding sentiment of the individual becomes extended to the group and the same motives which prompt him to seek his own welfare, prompt him also to seek the welfare of the group for which he has a sentiment of loyalty.

Another characteristic of the group sentiment should be noted because of its place in the life of a congregation and its relation to the minister's work as a preacher. It is possible for an individual to share the sentiments of more than one group, if their natures and aims do not bring them into conflict, and it is even possible that a sort of hierarchy of group sentiments may be formed for a system of groups in which each larger group includes the lesser. Each group is thus made the object of the extended self-sentiment in a way which includes the sentiment for the lesser group in that for the larger.<sup>6</sup> It seems to be the contention of some that such an ex-

1 Op. cit., pp. 87-92.

2 Ibid., pp. 93-97.

3 The Creator Spirit, p. 180.

4 The Building of the Church, especially Chap. II.

5 Op. cit., p. 110.

6 Cf. Jefferson, op. cit., pp. 59-63; McDougall, op. cit., pp. 112-115.

tension of group sentiments is normal, if not inevitable, and that it constitutes the dynamic of the Christian fellowship of the church. Thus, Dr. Jefferson protests that when the minister accepts it as his primary task to train a congregation in the love of Christian fellowship, he is not dwarfing their affections or curtailing the range of their sympathies. For, he continues,

"Affections are most surely enriched and strengthened only when cultivated in narrow fields. It is the man who loves his own wife as he loves no other woman, who comes to take a chivalric attitude to all women everywhere. By his love for one woman he grows into a widening appreciation of the dignity and beauty of womanhood. It is the father who loves his own children as he loves no others, whose affections go out farthest toward all boys and girls . . . It is the man who has come into fellowship with his brother men in his own Church who is most likely to come into right relations with men who have no connection with organized Christianity. . . . The church of Jesus is established for the express purpose of kindling the fire of love. Sermons are a part of the fuel by which the fire is nourished."<sup>1</sup>

Thus love which is strong in the smaller group reaches out to embrace successively larger groups until it finally embraces the whole human race. Now, it may or may not be true that the formation of such a hierarchy of group sentiments is inevitable, but certainly it is possible, and its possibility brings into bold relief one of the visions which should be a challenge and an inspiration to the minister in his work as a preacher.

#### Summary of Practical Applications.

Without making a detailed recapitulation of all the

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., pp. 59-60.

specific applications of this brief study of the group mind which have been indicated in the discussion, we may summarize them under three heads.

Since knowing the audience is almost as important in the speech situation as knowing one's subject, it is highly desirable that the preacher endeavour to know his audience, not only in terms of the individuals who compose it (though that certainly is essential), but also in terms of the organized system of mental forces which is the product of the mental interactions of group life. That is to say, he needs a telescopic, as well as a microscopic, knowledge of the audience. Undoubtedly most thoughtful ministers, in the course of their pulpit, pastoral, and administrative work in a congregation, generalize their observations with regard to the "mind", "character", or "personality" of that congregation. Such generalizations describe for the preacher the group mind to which he must address his sermons, and to the extent that his generalizations are accurate, they must surely serve as a guiding influence to him in the preparation and delivery of sermons--unless he has failed to cultivate the homiletical habit of audience-consciousness<sup>1</sup> in his preaching. But it seems valid, in light of our study of the group mind in this chapter, to say that more accurate and more practically useful knowledge of the group mind of a particular congregation could be acquired by the preacher if he set about the task of studying it in

1 Cf. Black, J., Mystery of Preaching, pp. 39-41.

a more thorough and systematic way than by merely generalizing his casual observations.

If he knows to relate them to the group mind of the congregation, some of the disciplines prescribed in the courses of study for the ministerial student in his formal education should give him certain insights into the group mind of the religious audience--disciplines, for example, like national history, ecclesiastical history, the history of literature, historical dogmatics, Biblical history, and the psychology of religion. Such studies as Professor H. E. Luccock's Jesus and the American Mind, Dr. Neibuhr's Social Origin of Denominations, and Professor Gardner's The Modern Mind<sup>1</sup> would help one in the understanding of the group mind of a particular congregation. And, while surveys are sometimes exceedingly barren, it seems not unlikely that a survey might be devised which would supply the minister with information about certain aspects of the mind of a congregation. But, whatever the means employed, for the most effective preparation and delivery of sermons the minister would profit by the knowledge of his audience which is to be gained from viewing it as a group mind.

However, the minister does not seek to know his audience as an end in itself. Rather, such knowledge is a means to the end that, in his preaching, as in other phases of his ministry, the preacher may develop in his people a Christian group mind. In a chapter on "Building Moods and Tempers", Dr. Jefferson writes:

1 Chap. XIV in his book, Psychology and Preaching.



"A congregation possesses a disposition as pronounced and characteristic as that of any of its members. This disposition must be moulded by the preacher. The moulding process passes through its most critical stages in the hours of public worship. The preacher is not simply an instructor, he is a fashioner of character, a maker of those moods and tempers which give character its bent and sinew. He is a builder, and his business is to construct a frame of mind."<sup>1</sup>

This involves the persuasion of the group to accept Christian beliefs and to practice Christian acts, but especially does it involve the formation and development of Christian sentiments. The technique by means of which sentiments are developed was described in Chapter IV. It suffices at this point, therefore, merely to note its relation to the group mind.

In this process of developing the Christian group mind, the minister does not grasp the ideal function of preaching if he thinks of his relation to the congregation in terms of that of the potter who moulds the clay, or even that of the gardener who cultivates the flower. The sermon is more than a tool in the hands of the preacher by means of which he may do something to the congregation. At its best, preaching is a function of the group mind--the preacher's voice being the mechanism through which the sermon becomes audible. His place in the group is strategic, to be sure, and his contribution to the product is proportionately large. But the product is still a synthetic one, emerging from the interaction of all the minds in the group. What Aristotle has said of speech in general is all the more true of the sermon--that it is "com-

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., pp. 119-120.

posed of three elements, viz. the speaker, the subject of the speech, and the persons addressed".<sup>1</sup> We have seen no better description of this ideal than that of Canon Raven, when he writes of the preacher:

"For his work, like all others, he must prepare himself, collecting, arranging, digesting the material for his sermon; but his medium is not merely argument or gesture; it is his own whole personality. He must not talk about his subject, so much as live it; an objective presentation, as in a lecture or statement, is insufficient; for he is not aiming at the information of his hearers' minds so much as at the more subtle and permeating transmission of his personal experience to them. Words and phrases, emphasis and delivery, are only the technique; even the scheme and contents of his discourse are only the means to its central purpose: he is to impart a sharing of the Spirit, and that cannot be done except by the activity of his whole and integrated self in contact with their selves. He must for the time be his sermon, giving himself, as gripped and saturated by his ideal, to his audience, giving not merely ideas to their minds or emotions to their feelings, but person to person. To attain this, his study of his subject-matter and method must be succeeded by a period of collectedness and concentration, when he deliberately ceases to be concerned with technical matters and fixes his attention solely upon his theme, upon God and God's people, shedding his self-consciousness and surrendering his critical detachment, throwing himself, as we say, into his subject unreservedly. When this is accomplished, he can liberate and make available a real creative power, welding together the members of his congregation and enabling them with himself to apprehend their common ideal. The analogy of the conductor of an orchestra is perhaps the simplest and closest, though all representative activity will supply a parallel. The conductor has his score, which, like the preacher's knowledge of God, is an approximate rendering of the reality: he has to convey his interpretation to his fellows that they may together, each in his own function, realize the master's purpose and express it in his music or worship. If a perfect result is to be attained, each must be inspired by the task to which

1 Rhetoric of Aristotle, p. 22.

each contributes, and the band must act as one in its execution."<sup>1</sup>

In the practical experience of the minister, such a high ideal as that which Canon Raven has described may not be reached very often, but when it is even approximated, there is the consciousness that the group mind of a congregation has aspired once again to a more complete fellowship with God in a more complete and enriched brotherhood of man.

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., pp. 173-174.

"Each new convert is sometimes vulgarly called by revivalists another star in the crowns which they will wear in the future life. If there were only power of discrimination, they would see that their success in dragging many so-called converts into the whirl of excitement, hypnotising them, and leaving them empty afterward, is more fitly likened to the triumph of a man of prowess who wears scalps of victims as trophies."--E. D. Starbuck.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE ABNORMAL RELIGIOUS AUDIENCE: CROWD PSYCHOLOGY AND RE- LIGIOUS REVIVALS.

Following the conviction expressed in Chapter II that in social psychology the crowd should be regarded as an abnormal social group, we have thus far been dealing only with the psychology of the normal religious audience. For it is almost inevitable that a distorted conception of audience psychology is formed when it is approached from the standpoint of the psychology of the crowd. One would not expect to gain from the observation and study of the behaviour of a hypnotic a valid interpretation of the way in which people behave under normal conditions. Neither should we expect from the study of crowds to gain a valid interpretation of the psychology of a normal audience. Inhibitions play an important part in the conduct of man, and when his normal inhibitions are blocked, or broken down, he becomes decidedly a different man. This difference is very similar to the difference between the normal group and the psychological crowd.

When we were classifying the typical religious audience (Chapter II), it was noted that in the case of certain intense types of religious revivals, the preacher's audience belonged to a classification different from its usual one. Such an observation might seem to indicate that the study of religious revivals does not fall within the scope of this pa-

per. However, in view of the importance of preaching in revivalism, and in light of the influence which the technique of revival preaching has sometimes exerted on general homiletical practice, if not on the theory as expounded in recognized text-books on the subject, it is felt that a study of the abnormal religious audience, as it is found in the more intense revivalism, should be made, and its bearing on homiletics indicated.

#### Outstanding Works on Crowd Psychology.

Considerable careful study has been made of the psychology of crowds. Among the outstanding major works are those already mentioned<sup>1</sup> by Le Bon, Trotter, Conway, McDougall, and Martin. In addition to these major works, there are briefer treatments in most of the text-books on social psychology, in works on public speaking and preaching (Scott, Psychology of Public Speaking; and Gardner, Psychology and Preaching, for example), works on the psychology of religion (Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals; Pratt, Religious Consciousness; Cutten, Psychological Phenomena of Christianity; Dimond, The Psychology of the Methodist Revival; Grimshaw, The Psychology of Revivals<sup>2</sup>), and works on advertising (such as Bernays, Propaganda; Poffenberger, Psychology in Advertising; and Scott, The Psychology of Advertising).

In general, these expositions of crowd psychology differ in four respects. In view of the different schools of psychology represented among the authors, it is inevitable that there should be a difference in the terminology used and

<sup>1</sup> Chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> A Ph. D. thesis. 1933, University of Edinburgh.

the psychological mechanisms employed to explain the various crowd phenomena. Le Bon, for example, employs the mechanisms of the "unconscious", the "collective mind", "contagion", and "suggestion". Martin agrees with Le Bon on the significance of the "unconscious", but rejects the concepts of "the collective mind", "contagion", and "suggestion", employing for explanatory purposes such terms as "complex", "compulsion neurosis", "fixations". McDougall relies mostly on certain "instincts", "emotions", "sentiments", "suggestion", "imitation", and "primitive sympathy" as his explanatory concepts. And writers like Bernard and Allport, of the behaviouristic school, while they may use such terms as suggestion, imitation, and sympathy, depend primarily on their fundamental mechanism, the "conditioned response".

There is observable also certain differences of emphasis among the interpreters of crowd psychology. Trotter, for example, gives to "the herd instinct" an emphasis which is comparable to that placed on "imitation" by Tarde. Le Bon and McDougall lay great stress on the communication of ideas and emotions in the crowd, while Martin dismisses suggestion, imitation, and sympathy, as being of very little significance in the psychology of the crowd.

While all these writers contend explicitly that the crowd is not a mere aggregation of people, but that a peculiar psychic change must happen to a group of people before they become a crowd, nevertheless, McDougall seems to be the only

one who is carefully consistent in the restricted use of the term "crowd". Le Bon makes the crowd practically synonymous with the masses before he has finished his treatise. Martin implies by his treatment that almost any organized group having a "cause" to advance or an "ideal" to propagate, such as a sect, a political party, or a labour union, or even the readers of one newspaper, is a crowd. Trotter is interested in tracing his thesis through all kinds of groups, and so has no particular occasion to feel constrained to use the term crowd in its restricted sense; his interest is in the "herd", which includes crowds and other kinds of groups. But Conway uses the term with reference to almost every imaginable variety of group, so long as it is too large to assemble around one dining table. From the study of these authors' works, probably more confusion arises from their injudicious use of the term "crowd" than from any source.

A fourth difference is in some of the mental characteristics which are observable in the psychological crowd, but this difference is of such minor significance in relation to our purpose in studying crowd psychology that it may be disregarded.

Much more impressive than these differences among the writers mentioned is the fundamental unity of the pictures they draw of the crowd. Without subscribing wholly to any one school of psychology represented, and without accepting in its entirety the interpretation of one author, it is quite possible to set forth a broad outline of the psychology of the crowd which



will be useful in the study of the abnormal religious audience.

### Mental Characteristics of the Crowd.

In the crowd, even the most cultured and intelligent members become, for the time being, primitive men. Thinking is of a very low order, tending to be quite stereotyped. The coarser emotions are dominant, and seem to drown all others. A sense of invincible power drives the crowd to attempt even the impossible. It is tolerant of nobody who threatens to thwart its purposes. It is capable of the most savage cruelty and of ruthless destruction, but it may also rise to the heights of moral splendour in deeds of heroic self-sacrifice. It is credulous, hasty in judgment, highly imaginative, and suggestible to an extreme degree. It is blindly obedient to its leader, but very fickle and likely at any moment to crucify the leader whom, a moment before, it was willing to worship almost as a god.

### Conditions of Crowd Formation.

Under what conditions is an aggregation of people transformed into a psychological crowd? The writer witnessed such a transformation during the period of the numerous bank failures in America in November, 1930. Several large banks in Louisville, Kentucky, had closed following the crash of a large investment company having holdings throughout the south. Uneasiness with regard to the safety of other banks was felt, of course. Two or three days after the failure of these banks, about the usual number of shoppers were walking in both direc-

tions on Fourth Avenue, in the block in which were located a department store and a bank, when suddenly the number of people entering the bank began to increase noticeably. Lines of unusual proportions formed at the tellers' windows in the bank. The attention of passersby was attracted, and they stopped to peer in at the windows, if not to join the lines that jammed the entrance to the bank. Presently policemen arrived on their motorcycles, with sirens screaming, and in less than ten minutes a normal street aggregation of people was transformed into a panic-stricken crowd intent on one purpose--to draw their money out of the bank before it closed. After the run was finally stopped, it was reported that the department store next door to the bank had paid a number of employees that morning with cheques on that bank. When the hour for lunch came, these employees had gone in a group, with cheques in hand, to get them cashed. When the passing shoppers noticed this unusually large number of people entering the bank with cheques and leaving with cash, that scene immediately suggested to them that there was a run on this bank which might cause it to close, as other banks in the city had done so recently, and that if they had money in that bank, they had better go and draw it out immediately.

This incident exhibits quite clearly what Dr. McDougall and others consider to be the fundamental conditions of collective mental activity; namely, "a common object of mental activity, a common mode of feeling in regard to it, and some degree of reciprocal influence between members of the group".<sup>1</sup>

1 The Group Mind, p. 33.

Given those three conditions in a group, and that group is not necessarily transformed into a crowd, but without those conditions, it is doubtful whether a group can be transformed into a psychological crowd. In the bank run described above, we have the common object of mental activity--the bank. There is not merely a common mode of some kind of feeling, but a very strong emotion of fear for the safety of the money in that bank, and very obvious reciprocal influence among the members of the group--the fear of each stimulating and intensifying the fear in the other.

In such a case, no leader for the crowd is necessary.<sup>1</sup> However, crowd leaders play a significant part, not merely in directing the activities of a crowd already formed, but also in the formation of crowds--especially in the audience situation. Because it serves also to show very accurately the stages by which an audience becomes a crowd, we quote at some length Professor E. D. Martin's description of a typical crowd orator and his technique.

"Preferably", he says, "the speaker should be an 'old war horse', a victor in many battles. . . . When on rare occasions the spirit of the crowd begins to manifest itself . . . . I have noticed that discussion instantly ceases and people begin merely to repeat their creeds and hurl cant phrases at one another. All then is changed, though subtly. There may be laughter as at first; but it is different. . . . It is laughter at someone or something. Even the applause is changed. It is more frequent. It is more vigorous, and instead of showing the

1 W. D. Scott, Psychology of Public Speaking, p. 175, follows Le Bon in asserting that "it is impossible for a crowd to exist without a leader." Undoubtedly it is usually the case with crowds that someone becomes the recognized leader, but Scott's statement seems to be entirely too broad.

mere approval of some sentiment, it becomes a means of showing the numerical strength of a group of believers of some sort. . . . So long as the matter discussed requires close and sustained effort of attention, and the method of treatment is kept free from anything which savours of ritual, even the favourite dogmas of popular belief may be discussed, and though the interest be intense, it will remain critical and the audience does not become a crowd. But let the most trivial bit of bathos be expressed in rhythmical cadences and in platitudinous terms, and the most intelligent audience will react as a crowd. Crowd-making oratory is almost invariably platitudinous. In fact, we think as a crowd only in platitudes, propaganda, ritual, dogma, and symbol. Crowd-ideas are ready-made, they possess finality and universality. They are fixed. They do not develop. They are ends in themselves. Like obsessions of the insane, there is a deadly inevitability in the logic of them. They are 'compulsions'. . . . The orators who commonly hold forth at such gatherings (political conventions, mass meetings, and revivals) know intuitively the functional value of bathos, ridicule<sup>1</sup>, and platitude, and it is upon such knowledge that they base the success of their careers in 'getting the crowd'<sup>2</sup>. . . . As the audience becomes crowd, the speaker's cadence becomes more marked, his voice more oracular, his gestures more emphatic. His message becomes a recital of great abstract 'principles'. The purely obvious is held up as transcendental. Interest is kept upon just those aspects of things which can be grasped with least effort by all. Emphasis is laid upon those thought processes in which there is greatest natural uniformity. The general, abstract, and superficial come to be exalted at the expense of that which is unique and personal. Forms of thought are made to stand as objects of thinking. . . . Popular orators deal only with the greatest common denominator of the meaning of these terms. . . . Now if attention can be directed to this imaginary and vague 'meaning for everybody'--which is really the meaning for nobody--and so directed that the associations with the unique in personal experience are blocked, these abstractions will occupy the whole field of consciousness. The mind will yield to any connection which is made among them almost automatically."<sup>3</sup>

1 Cf. Grimshaw, Psychology of Revivals, pp. 100 and 219.

2 Cf. Aristotle, Rhetoric, pp. 190-191.

3 Martin, E. D., The Behaviour of Crowds, pp. 24-30.

"Bathos . . . . rhythmical cadences.. . . platitudes . . . . propaganda . . . . ritual, dogma . . . . symbol . . . . voice more oracular . . . . gestures more emphatic . . . . abstract 'principles' . . . . the purely obvious." Here we have the fundamental technique of crowd oratory, and for the most part it is the familiar technique of suggestion which is commonly employed in inducing the hypnotic state in individuals.

Thus it becomes apparent that in the crowd there is a general breaking down of the normal inhibitions to belief, action and emotion, which is but another way of saying that in the crowd conditions are conducive to the extreme operation of the processes of suggestion, imitation, and sympathy. For in addition to the conditions already noted, there is in the crowd situation a restriction of bodily movements, of which Sidis says: "If anything gives us a strong sense of our individuality, it is surely our voluntary movements. . . . Conversely the life of the individual self sinks, shrinks with the decrease of variety and intensity of voluntary movements."<sup>1</sup> And along with this decided decrease in the individual's self-consciousness, there is a reduction of his sense of personal responsibility and a corresponding increase in his sense of power, because of his unity with the crowd.

As has been intimated earlier in this paper, with regard to the psychology of the normal religious audience, suggestion, imitation, and sympathy are not ultimate factors

1 Psychology of Suggestion, p. 299.

in social psychology. In the case of crowd phenomena involving motor activity, the more ultimate explanation is probably to be found in some statement of the principle of ideo-motor action, or dynamogenesis. This principle, as stated by James, has been discredited by Professor E. L. Thorndike and others, but the conclusion seems still to be warranted that there is a "tendency for any mental content upon which spontaneous attention is fixed, to gain control of the motor centres apart from the will, and thus to work itself out into the activity of the muscular system".<sup>1</sup>

For the sake of clarity, it should be stated explicitly that in the crowd no new mental processes are operative that are not to be found in the normal group. No subtle fluid or ethereal substance passes from one to another and envelops the crowd. There is no possession of the individual by a mysterious collective mind of the kind postulated by Le Bon.<sup>2</sup> The individual is still an individual, but his behaviour is modified in those respects, and by those means which we have indicated above, so that he behaves in a primitive, rather than in a normal, manner.

#### Examples of Crowd Phenomena in Revivals.

From the accounts of the more spectacular revivals of history it is evident that many revival phenomena which have been variously ascribed to Satan, the Holy Spirit, or Mesmerism, are really but typical crowd phenomena. One example of a religious audience which had been transformed in-

<sup>1</sup> Dimond, S. G., The Psychology of the Methodist Revival, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> The Crowd, p. 26.

to a crowd at the Cane Ridge Camp Meeting in Kentucky was cited in Chapter II. Rev. Jonathon Parsons describes a revival which he conducted in the West Parish of Lyme, Connecticut, during the Great Awakening in New England, which also manifests typical crowd phenomena. He says of that remarkable revival,

"Many had their countenances changed; their thoughts seemed to trouble them, so that their loins were loosed, and their knees smote one against another. Great numbers cried out aloud in the anguish of their souls. Several stout men fell as though a cannon had been discharged, and a ball had made its way through their hearts. Some young women were thrown into hysteric fits. . . . I was commonly obliged to make several stops of considerable length, and entreat them, if possible, to restrain the flood of affection, that so they might attend to further truths which were to be offered, and others might not be disaffected. Some would after a while recover themselves, and others, I am satisfied, could not."<sup>1</sup>

G. B. Cutten reports still another particularly interesting account of a revival in which crowd phenomena were quite evident.

"In 1893", he writes, "I attended a meeting of a sect called 'McDonaldites', on Prince Edward Island, Canada. The process of conversion extended over some weeks or months, and there were two young people then 'going through the works'. . . . As soon as the pastor commenced to preach the candidates began to twitch and jerk. One of the candidates, a young woman, was particularly susceptible. She twitched and moved her head so violently that her hat was thrown off, her hair pins scattered, her long hair waved and finally snapped. This was continued for over an hour, reminding one of a severe attack of chorea. The interesting part, in connection with our subject, was the difficulty experienced, after watching these people twitch, in controlling myself.

<sup>1</sup> Tracy, The Great Awakening, p. 138 ff.

It seemed that it would have required but little longer to put me in the candidate class. The very fear of the on-looker that he may be similarly attacked acts as a powerful suggestion, and the more suggestible soon realize their fears. In accordance with the law of suggestion, every new case adds power to the cause, and soon conditions are ripe for the rapid spread of the psychic disorder over a whole community."<sup>1</sup>

#### The Extent of Such Phenomena.

These are fair examples, not of what usually happens in the religious revival, but of the kind of crowd phenomena which have been observed at certain times during the more intense revivals of history. Similar descriptions are to be found in accounts of the revivals of Jonathon Edwards in, and around, Northampton, of Whitefield all along the Atlantic coast in America and in many communities in Great Britain, of Wesley in England, of McGready, the McGee brothers, and others in the camp meetings of Kentucky in the early 1800's, of Finney in the "burnt district" of New York, and of many others of more remote and more recent times.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, it must be kept in mind that, just as the individual "sinks" by degrees into a state of hypnotism, so also does the group sink by degrees into the state of the crowd. There is no clear line of demarcation. All degrees of crowd-mindedness are to be found in the various revivals, according as all, or only some, of the conditions of crowd-formation exist at a particular time.

#### Conditions in Revivals Conducive to Crowd-formation.

Let us, then, note some of the conditions existing

<sup>1</sup> In Grimshaw, op. cit., Chs. I and III, there are excellent accounts. Also his bibliography is very inclusive.



in the more intense forms of religious revival which are conducive to crowd-formation. In the period preparatory to a revival, usually there is to be found a condition of subdued excitement, of mental strain and expectancy. This condition is sometimes brought about quite spontaneously, and sometimes it is produced deliberately by means of a technique involving very elaborate organization.

At Cambuslang, Scotland, in 1742, the Rev. Mr. McCulloch had been preaching for nearly a year, "in the ordinary course of his sermons", on "those subjects which tend most directly to explain the nature and prove the necessity of regeneration."

" . . . and for some months before the remarkable events now about to be mentioned," continues the narrator, "a more than ordinary concern about religion appeared among his flock. . . . At this period, though several persons had come to the minister under deep concern about their salvation, there had been no great number; but on Thursday, the 18th, after sermon, about fifty persons came to him under alarming apprehensions about the state of their souls; and such was their anxiety, that he had to pass the night in conversing with them."<sup>1</sup>

The revival at Northampton under Jonathon Edwards, and many others in history, started in just such a spontaneous way as did the revival at Cambuslang.

In the more recent revivals, however--especially the highly organized ones under men like Sunday, Chapman, "Gypsy" Smith, Sam Jones, B. Fay Mills, and their many disciples in America--prayer bands and skilful newspaper pub-

<sup>1</sup> Narratives of Revivals of Religion, pp. 6-7.

licity have been the means of most frequent use in creating the "atmosphere" for revival.<sup>1</sup>

This like-mindedness has been called by Pratt "the sine qua non of a successful revival".<sup>2</sup> When people thus prepared are brought together in one place, McDougall's three essential conditions of collective mental action, which were noted above, are fulfilled. There is "a common object of mental activity, a common mode of feeling in regard to it, and some degree of reciprocal influence between members of the group".

Being "with one accord in one place", other factors are then brought to bear in the direction of crowd formation. Usually the group is isolated in one building, or other marked-off area, so that distractions are reduced and each person is conscious of his unity with the group. Through close seating, or standing, voluntary activity is restricted. There is concerted action in the postures assumed in prayer or in the singing.

In the writer's childhood days, he attended a series of "protracted meetings" in a Methodist chapel in Mississippi, during which, if the minister himself failed by means of his sermon to break down the inhibitions of the congregation, he could nearly always depend on a certain Brother Dilworth, a pious but emotionally unstable layman, to pray in such a way as to succeed in fanning the flames of emotion so that there

1 For a detailed description of the organizations and techniques used by Mills and Sunday, see Grimshaw, op. cit., pp. 320-323.

2 Religious Consciousness, p. 174.

was shouting, weeping, embracing, and occasionally fainting, throughout the congregation. And, as recently as the summer of 1933, we witnessed the induction of a similar crowd state, primarily by means of prayer, in a revival of the Holiness sect at Corinth, Mississippi.

But the singing of hymns is usually more effective in inducing the crowd state than is prayer. In congregational singing there is not only concerted action, but also the source of potent suggestion and autosuggestion, as well as the means of stimulating and communicating emotion. Loud has written a valuable interpretation of the historical development and psychological significance of hymns in American revivalism.<sup>1</sup> In interpreting the contribution of the Wesleys he says:

"Both Charles and John tried to translate their adventure in faith into verse, and this autobiographical element contributed to the emotional power of their hymns. Their conception of instantaneous release through conversion was individualized. Every singer felt that the call was indeed to 'Even Me'. And the hymns themselves mirrored the unrest, agony, groping and struggle of the soul; the grace, hope, light and peace held out by faith; the sympathy and guidance toward the goal; the bursting of the bonds and the rejoicing in redemption. No one sang to himself alone. That first evangel melody was created for hundreds and thousands to join with their voices and their hearts. All became one voice and one heart. As the rhythmic lines swelled in the unison, the spirit touched every one. Belief was instilled. The impulse to consecration was infused. The response was inevitable."<sup>2</sup>

Of such significance is the music to the technique of revival-

1 Cf. Grimshaw, op. cit., Chap. V, for another good account of revival music.

2 Evangelized America, p. 113. For an interesting interpretation of the hymn "Just As I Am", in terms of the psychology of autosuggestion, see Pratt, op. cit., pp. 179-180.

ism that one does not think of Moody without Sankey, of "Billy" Sunday without Homer Rodeheaver, or of John Wesley without Charles.

Sometimes the conditions which have been mentioned above prove to be sufficient of themselves to induce the crowd mind in a revival, even when the speaker is a man of not an unusual degree of prestige, or when he does not follow the usual technique of a crowd orator.

For example, Mr. John Livingstone, under whose preaching a congregation was evidently transformed into a revival crowd at Shotts, Scotland, on Monday, June 21, 1630, was a reserved young man, only twenty-seven years of age, and not yet ordained. However, a very impressive communion service on Sunday morning, together with an extended period of prayer and conference Sunday night, had produced a most appropriate state of mind among the people. Furthermore, an unanticipated incident in the service on Monday afforded him an opportunity which he used with consummate skill to stimulate fear and impress the urgency of immediate action on the congregation. The incident, with a brief excerpt from the sermon, has been related as follows:

"As he was about to close the discourse, a heavy shower came suddenly on, which made the people hastily take to their cloaks and mantles, and he proceeded to speak to the following purpose:--  
'If a few drops of rain so discompose you, how discomposed would you be--how full of horror and despair, if God should deal with you as you deserve? And thus he will deal with all the finally impenitent. God might justly rain fire and brimstone upon you, as he did upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain. But, forever blessed be his name! the door of mercy still stands open for such as you are. The Lord Jesus Christ, by tabernacling in our nature, and

obeying that law which we have wickedly and willfully broken, and suffering that punishment we have so richly deserved, has now become a refuge from the storm, and a covert from the tempest of divine wrath, due to us for sin. His merits and mediation are the alone defence from that storm, and none but those who come to Christ just as they are, empty of everything, and take the offered mercy at his hand, will have the benefit of this shelter.' In such expressions, and many others, was he led on for about an hour, (after he had finished what he had premeditated,) in a strain of exhortation and warning, with great enlargement and melting of heart, and with such visible impressions on his audience, as made it evident that the power of God was present with them. And, indeed, so great was the power of God manifested on the occasion, that about five hundred persons were converted, principally by means of this sermon."<sup>1</sup>

In the case of Mr. Livingstone, there was certainly the technique of crowd oratory, if not the prestige of "an old war horse"--to revert to Dr. Martin's epithet. And in many other instances, notably in the American Revival of 1857, when the other conditions of crowd formation have been present in the proper degree, it has been quite possible for men of relatively little ability, reputation, or other kinds of prestige, to convert a group into a psychological crowd of the revival type.

In most cases, however, the prestige of the speaker has been a factor of prime significance in the psychology of revivalism. It is difficult, of course, to separate the prestige that a speaker attains through his reputation from the prestige that is inherent in his personality. But the reputation which preceded men like Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards,

<sup>1</sup> Narratives of Revivals of Religion, pp. 85-86.

Moody, "Gypsy" Smith, and "Billy" Sunday into the communities in which they preached had much to do with their effectiveness as revivalists.

An experience in a cotton factory at New York Mills, as related by Finney, indicates in a striking way the extent to which his reputation combined with his personality to accomplish hypnotic effects. As he went through the factory, to which his reputation had preceded him, he says:

"I observed there was a good deal of agitation among those who were busy at their looms, and their mules, and other implements of work. On passing through one of the apartments, where a great number of young women were attending to their weaving, I observed a couple of them eyeing me, and speaking very earnestly to each other; and I could see that they were a good deal agitated, although they both laughed. I went slowly toward them. They saw me coming, and were evidently much excited. One of them was trying to mend a broken thread, and I observed that her hands trembled so that she could not mend it. I approached slowly, looking on each side, at the machinery, as I passed; but observed that this girl grew more and more agitated, and could not proceed with her work. When I came within eight or ten feet of her, I looked solemnly at her. She observed it, and was quite overcome, and sunk down, and burst into tears. The impression caught almost like powder, and in a few moments nearly all the room were in tears. This feeling spread through the factory. . . . The revival went through the mill with astonishing power, and in the course of a few days nearly all in the mill were hopefully converted."<sup>1</sup>

Loud's description of Rev. James McGready, who was one of the leaders in that amazing Scotch-Irish Revival of 1800, in Kentucky, shows very clearly the combination of the crowd-leader personality with the crowd-orator technique.

<sup>1</sup> Autobiography, p. 183 f.

He says of McGready:

"His Calvinism was of the Edwardean temper and temperature. He would reach out with a mighty swing of his arm and in pantomimic parallel would pluck out a figurative sinner and dangle him over the brimstone brink. Then to those quailing under his invective and imagery he would offer a Wesleyan way of escape leading through conversion to rebirth. It was said that his glowering visage, compelling eyes, and thunderous voice augmented the terrors of his composite Calvinistic hell and Methodistic regeneration."<sup>1</sup>

In light of these descriptions of revivalists and their techniques, one has but to recall the descriptions of crowd leaders and their techniques, as given by Martin, McDougall, and Le Bon, to perceive that they are fundamentally the same. And chief among the crowd speaker's techniques are three--bold affirmation, frequent repetition, and vivid emotional imagery.

#### Rhythm in Revivals.

But, while crowd psychology goes far towards affording an explanation of many revival phenomena, such a study is by no means complete without a recognition of the significance of rhythm to revivalism. Pratt, after calling attention to the innumerable rhythms which are observable in inorganic life, as well as in the organic functions of the bodies of animals and man, says:

"Our mental life not only is deeply affected by all of these physiological processes, but carries the principle of rhythm (with or without bodily correlate) still farther, imitating constantly the swing

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 97. For other instances of the effects of revivalists' prestige, see Underwood, A. C., Conversion: Christian and Non-Christian, pp. 202-204.

and return of the pendulum as long as life lasts. Hunger and satiety, sleep and waking, exertion and repose . . . follow each other with almost the certainty, if without the exact regularity, of day and night and the revolving seasons. It would be odd, therefore, if so fundamental a human characteristic as religion should fail to be influenced by this deep-seated human characteristic; and as a fact, the religious consciousness is as rhythmic in its action as any other aspect of the human mind."<sup>1</sup>

Pratt shows that the recurring rhythm of intense religious consciousness is characteristic not only of the lives of isolated individuals, but also of groups. And G. B. Cutten has presented a table of religious revivals from the Great Awakening of 1734 to the Welsh Revival of 1905 to justify the conclusion that revivals occur periodically. The table is as follows:<sup>2</sup>

The Great Awakening	1734-1750
Wesley	1740-1790
Kentucky	1796-1815
Nettleton and Finney	1828-1840
Miller	1840-1844
American, Irish, and Welsh	1857-1859
Moody	1873-1880
Welsh	1905-1906

A careful study of this table leads one to question the accuracy of Cutten's conclusion, for there is no regularity in the intervals of time between the revivals listed. Furthermore, I. G. Grimshaw reports that in his study of 127 different revivals in 23 different countries, he could discover no evidence of periodicity when those revivals were ranged chronologically regardless of the country in which they occurred, when ranged chronologically according to the countries

<sup>1</sup> Religious Consciousness, pp. 165-166.

<sup>2</sup> Psychological Phenomena of Christianity, p. 186.



in which revivals have been most frequent, or when ranged according to revival "peaks", or in terms of the intervals between the end of one revival and the beginning of another.<sup>1</sup> This is what one would expect, rather than a recurrence at regular intervals, for too many variable factors enter into the origin and development of revivals for us to expect periodicity. To say this, however, is not to deny the significance of rhythm as a factor among the conditions under which revivals occur. It is possible that the rhythm of intense religious consciousness is an irregular rhythm. Or, it may be that the rhythm itself is quite regular, but that other factors combine with it in such a way as to interfere with the strict periodicity of religious revivals. At any rate, more accurate than Cutten's observation is Professor W. P. Paterson's statement in his Gifford Lectures:

"But the most that can be affirmed on the basis of long views of history is that religion has been subject to the law of ebb and flow. In the late eighteenth century the cultured population of Edinburgh was classified as Pagan and Christian, and thereafter it was so strongly apprehended by the Evangelical Revival as to forget that it had ever been anything but serious and orthodox--a fact which may be cited as evidence and symbol of the law of the recurring re-awakening and resurrection to which the religious spirit has been made subject."<sup>2</sup>

But of greater importance to our study are some of the rhythms to be found in the revival of a single community, or even within a single revival service.

Each revival in a community is wave-like in its

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> The Nature of Religion, p. 27.

intensity. Usually there is a preparatory period of relatively mild emotional excitement which gradually reaches a climax of intensity and then subsides. Of course, these waves are of unequal height and length, and within such a "primary" wave are "secondary" waves of emotional action and reaction. Each service is calculated to build cumulatively the primary wave of the revival in the community, and each successive part of the particular service is planned and executed in such a way as to build up an emotional climax at the end of the sermon, or during the "invitation hymn" immediately following the sermon. For this purpose, the rhythm of the music, the rhythm of prayers, and the rhythmical cadences in the delivery of the sermon are the most important means.<sup>1</sup>

Closely linked with the rhythm of emotion is the wave-like nature of attention. What Scott has shown by the application of experimental results to the technique of public speaking<sup>2</sup> the great revivalists have perceived intuitively, or have learned by trial-and-error, without the benefit of modern psychology. They have known that attention is subject to fatigue and that a single idea cannot be held in the focus of attention continuously for a very long period of time, probably not more than a few seconds.<sup>3</sup> They have learned, therefore, to use the anecdote, or some other familiar means, to relax attention temporarily, but always to lead back periodically to the text, the proposition, the appeal for

1 For an elaborate treatment of rhythm in relation to written and oral discourse, see Scott, op. cit., Chap. IX.

2 Ibid., Chap. VII.

3 Ibid., p. 110.

action, or whatever is most vital to the accomplishment of their purpose with the audience.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is evident that rhythm is an important factor in the technique of artful repetition, which in turn is one of the standard tools of the crowd orator--of the revivalist no less than of the labour union agitator who would lead men to walk out in a strike, or of the American radio advertiser who would induce his listeners to smoke a particular brand of "toasted" cigarettes by repeating with rhythmic periodicity that "nature in the raw is seldom mild".

Thus it seems justifiable to conclude that, from a psychological point of view, the phenomena of revivals are to be explained largely in terms of the "laws" of rhythm, on the one hand, and the principles of crowd psychology on the other. The revival audience of the most intense type is an abnormal group in which the usual inhibitions to belief, emotion, and action are so completely blocked, or broken down, that suggestion, sympathy, and imitation operate in the members of the audience with practically no restrictions.

#### Evaluation of Revivals.

To state such a conclusion is not, however, to im-

<sup>1</sup> An interesting variation of the time-honoured technique of repeating, at intervals in the sermon, the text or proposition is Dr. W. L. Stidger's "Symphonic Sermon Theme". He finds a striking couplet of poetry which expresses clearly and vividly the thought or the mood of the text, associates the couplet with the text in the minds of the audience in the early part of the sermon, and then periodically repeats the couplet, somewhat as the musical theme of a symphony is repeated at intervals by the orchestra, first by this group of instruments, then by that. For fuller exposition of the technique, see Stidger, Symphonic Sermon Themes.

ply that revivals--even those of the most intense form--are wholly evil. The facts do not justify such a sweeping condemnation. Too many men have been rescued from gutters of drunkenness through the acrobatic preaching of "Billy" Sunday; too many disintegrated personalities have been integrated through a vital assurance of the love of God which is associated with the preaching of Moody and the singing of Sankey; too many churches, once existing on the low plane of mechanical formality, have been revitalized and raised to heights of Christian fellowship through the sermons of Wesley; too many communities have been purged of gross social evils and infused with strong moral passions through the preaching of Finney to warrant the judgment that revivals are of no value.

Nor can the evils, weaknesses, and limitations of the more extreme forms of revivals be overlooked, or be considered of no consequence. Insanity, nervous disorders, sexual misconduct, bigotted intolerance, and other evils have been attributed with well-established evidence to some of the more extravagantly emotional revivals. Backslidings have been numerous, and in many cases the last state was far worse than the first.

The effects, then, of intense revivalism reveal a mixture of both good and evil. In his evaluation of revivals, Professor Pratt asserts that the positive elements in revival constitute its real value, the negative elements its harmful

limitations. Then, in explaining more specifically what he means, he says:

"The inhibition of reason, the inhibition of free and responsible individual action, the forcing of emotions and convictions and physical reactions upon relatively passive recipients through the use of semi-hypnotic methods, these things dwarf the personality and belittle the man, these things bring about few if any results of real and permanent value. It is from the recruits of these hypnotic methods that the subsequent 'backsliders' come. On the other hand, a revival adds to the values of life when it emphasizes the positive things, leaving the individual in full command of his reason and free to choose and to act, but giving him new insights and wider glimpses of the truth, opening up to him undreamed-of worlds of possible experience, revelations of new value, arousing in him larger inspirations, purer emotions, and higher aspirations and ideals. These things cannot be given by the methods of hypnotic suggestion and emotionalism. But neither are they to be brought about by conventional morality or 'cold' logic. And the church which understands human psychology and wishes for lasting results, will both refrain from the methods of the religious hypnotist and also make some special efforts to obtain 'seasons of refreshment from the hand of the Lord'."<sup>1</sup>

In view of Pratt's avowed purpose--to indicate only "in a very general way" which part of revivalism are good and which are evil--this is an admirable statement. But while it is true that the positive values which he names "cannot be given by methods of hypnotic suggestion and emotionalism" of themselves, at the same time, one must keep in mind that even these methods frequently have produced an experience, or have led to the making of an allegiance, which, in turn, has made possible the wholesome development of Christian personality

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 194.

by more commendable methods. What we mean, specifically, is this: Under the influence of mass suggestion, an individual may have an experience which, rightly or wrongly, is interpreted to be conversion. Following the usual course, presently he finds himself an accepted member of the church. But in the fellowship of that church, he develops attitudes, sentiments, ideals, and convictions which are productive of genuine Christian character. It cannot be said that such a character is the direct and immediate fruit of "hypnotic suggestion and emotionalism", to be sure, but to "hypnotic suggestion and emotionalism" must be given the credit for the first and decisive step in a direction which was productive of Christian character.

That such a result is the exception, rather than the rule, in revivalism must be admitted. Probably the most frequent criticism of revivals made by pastors--especially of the highly organized "union" revival which is conducted by a professional revivalist--is that so many of the "converts" do not identify themselves with a congregation, or if they do, they soon cease to attend services and thus fail to receive the Christian training which is necessary in order to stabilize the individual in a consistent Christian life. This criticism is supported by some "statistics of the results, in a single community, of revivals which were conducted by an imported evangelist", and which are presented in a table in Starbuck's Psychology of Religion<sup>1</sup> as follows:

1 P. 170.

	Number Receiv- ed.	'Dropped' before 6 weeks.	Received into full memb'ship	Relaps- ed since.	Now in good standing.
I. Converts in Revival Meet- ings conduct- ed by a Prof- essional Ev. angelist.	92	62	30	15	12
II. Converts in Regular Church Work (at Home, Sunday School, Revival by Pastor, etc.).	68	16	52	10	41

While it is dangerous to place too much weight on such statistics, they are confirmed by the judgments most frequently expressed by ministers who are in a position to judge most accurately in such matters, and they are in accord with what is to be expected in view of the psychology of revivalism.

The most significant implication of such a table is not the negative one--that professional evangelism is of relatively little value because a large per cent of the conversions resulting are impermanent. There is always room for the criticism that the conventional church services, sermons, and Sunday School work of the churches into which these new "converts" go, are not adequate to meet their needs. The more significant implication is that which is coming to be taken more seriously just at the present time in America, which has been in the past the "happy hunting ground" of professional revivalism,<sup>1</sup> but

<sup>1</sup> For an interpretation of characteristics of American life which partly account for this fact, see Grimshaw, op. cit., pp. 318-320.

which is now experiencing a reaction to it. This implication is aptly described in the slogan: "Every minister his own evangelist".

What, then, may the minister who would be his own evangelist, learn about preaching from the psychology of revivalism?

#### Applications to Homiletics.

Before discussing certain characteristics of the revivalist's technique more specifically in relation to homiletics, it should be noted that, apart from other conditions which we have found to be conducive to crowd-formation, the extreme homiletical techniques of the revivalist are most likely to be ineffective in producing crowd phenomena. The three factors of audience-attitude, speaker-personality, and speech-technique must be combined before crowd phenomena are manifested in the religious audience. Those factors are of such a nature that we cannot regard them quantitatively and suppose that they must combine in exactly equal proportions. And they react upon one another in such a mutually stimulating way that it seems impossible to discover any regular order of their appearance. But, in the absence of the appropriate audience-attitude, and lacking the glamour and prestige of the crowd-speaker personality, it is safe to say that "bathos, platitudes, abstract principles, and the purely obvious" might be presented to a religious audience in "rhythmical cadences", and with an "oracular voice", accompanied by the most "emphatic gestures," the net result being only that the preacher would have



made himself utterly ridiculous in the eyes of his audience. In other words, merely because these techniques are characteristic of the revivalistic crowd-orator's speech, it does not follow that they invariably produce crowd phenomena.

Moreover, a careful examination of the techniques of the revivalist and of the teachings of recognized authorities on homiletics leads one to the conclusion that they are not different in kind, but rather in degree.

We have seen, for example, that simplicity, both of content and of language, is characteristic of revival sermons. So simple are they, as a rule, that in printed form they are almost unreadable. Evidently Whitefield recognized to some extent the contrast between his sermons in oral and in printed form, for James Burns, after commenting that Whitefield's printed sermons give little indication of their tremendous power, relates that on one occasion when permission was asked of him to print a sermon which had created a profound impression on his hearers, he answered, "I have no objection, if you will print the lightning, thunder, and rainbow with it." Then Burns adds the comment that "it was the lightning, thunder, and rainbow which gave to the spoken words their spell, and held vast audiences in breathless stillness."<sup>1</sup> Yet simplicity of thought, language, and style, is not in itself a homiletical defect. In most text-books on the subject,<sup>2</sup> it is commended as a most desirable quality, and

<sup>1</sup> Revivals: Their Laws and Leaders, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Van Oosterzee, Practical Theology, pp. 328-329; Vinet, Homiletics, pp. 348 f.; Kidder, D. P., Treatise on Homiletics, pp. 293-296; Christlieb, Homiletics, pp. 366-373; Broadus, Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, pp. 301-302.

it is characteristic of the sermons of great preachers who would hardly be called crowd-orators of the pulpit.<sup>1</sup> It is not the simplicity itself, then, which is to be condemned in revival sermons, but the extreme banality to which simplicity is sometimes reduced. In so far as he speaks in terms of audience experience, rather than in "bookish" or theological language which has little, or no meaning to people, the revivalist has something to teach "the average minister" about simplicity in preaching.

Another characteristic which we find in the preaching of most revivalists is sensationalism. Admittedly, "sensational" is a relative term which is difficult to define satisfactorily. What is sensational to one person may be merely "dramatic", or "interesting", to another. But without attempting to draw a hard and fast line between what is to be regarded as sensational and what is not, it is safe to say that most revivalism of the intense form which we have been considering in this chapter is characterized by various forms of sensationalism. Mrs. Amie Semple McPherson uses all the mechanical devices of the theatre to support her histrionic talent in making "the four-square Gospel" sensationally impressive.<sup>2</sup> "Billy" Sunday's acrobatic preaching would be sensational even to an audience of deaf people.<sup>3</sup> Burns presents the following incident as a typical example of the dramatic power of White-

1 Alexander Whyte, Alexander Maclaren, and Phillips Brooks, for example.

2 Loud, op. cit., Chapter on "Corybantic Christianity".

3 Cutten, op. cit., pp. 190-191, gives a vivid description of Sunday's famous sermon on "Booze", of which this would certainly be true.

field:

"Lord Chesterfield was listening to him as in the course of his sermon he described the sinner as a blind beggar led by a dog. The dog leaving him he was forced to grope his way, guided only by a staff. 'Unconsciously he wanders to the edge of a precipice; his staff drops from his hand down the abyss, too far to send back an echo; he reaches forward cautiously to recover it; for a moment he poises on vacancy, and--'Good God!' shouted Chesterfield, as he sprang from his seat to avert the catastrophe, 'he is gone!'"<sup>1</sup>

In addition to such use of the extremely dramatic, sensationalism is often manifested in revival preaching by the use of slang, villification of opponents, "death-bed stories" and other remarkable anecdotes, and in attacking sins which have been traditionally associated with sensationalism.

For the sake of argument, we may grant that probably such sensationalism is often largely the self-expression of personalities which are lacking in the taste of culture and refinement, if not in the grace of Christian humility. We may admit that such sensationalism makes its appeal to the lower elements in human nature. But, when the sensationalism of the revivalist has been condemned as thoroughly as it deserves to be condemned, we must recognize that psychologically, it performs one useful and valid function which is probably the underlying reason for its frequent use by revivalists; namely, it enlists the interest and maintains the spontaneous attention of the audience. It is a cheap and tawdry means, but it is a means.

Here again, then, we find that the revivalist has

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 288.

simply taken a standard homiletical technique and carried it to extremes. For whether in teaching in the classroom, or in preaching in the pulpit, psychologists are agreed that spontaneous, rather than voluntary, attention is most desirable, chiefly because it avoids fatigue and is accompanied by a pleasant, rather than an unpleasant, feeling-tone.<sup>1</sup> And the recognized techniques for securing and maintaining attention which are commended in the text-books on public speaking and preaching are fundamentally the same as those employed by the revivalist. The difference, we repeat, is one of degree. But we agree heartily with Professor Gardner, when he says with regard to genuine dramatic action in the pulpit:

" . . . in this respect most preaching errs by deficiency rather than by excess. The average preacher is sadly lacking in dramatic power. How many sermons, otherwise good, are wanting in power because the preacher utterly fails to make men, incidents, situations embodying the truths he is seeking to impress, live before his hearers! Thrilling actions and events are related without appropriate--and perhaps with quite inappropriate--dramatic action. At best, the imagination of the audience is not assisted in the emotional realization of the scene; and sometimes is actually hindered by the blundering, unsympathetic presentation. Such preaching may be "didactic", but is certainly not dynamic. It may be instructional in form, but is not instructive in fact."<sup>2</sup>

A third characteristic which the preaching of the revivalist shares with the speaking of the typical crowd-orator is the use of positive affirmation and frequent repetition.

1 Admirable expositions of the psychology of attention in relation to speaking are to be found in O'Neill and Weaver, Elements of Speech, Ch. XVIII; Williamson, Speaking in Public, XVI; Gardner, Psychology and Preaching, Ch. VIII; Scott, Psychology of Public Speaking, Ch. VII; and Overstreet, Influencing Human Behaviour, Ch. I.

2 Psychology and Preaching, pp. 124-125.

This is not merely the accidental or unconscious practice, but the avowed theory, of at least one noted American revivalist, who writes in his book on How to Promote and Conduct a Successful Revival:

"Revival preaching to be effective must be positive. The doubter never has revivals. . . . A revival is a revolution in many important respects, and revolutions are never brought about by timid, fearful or deprecatory addresses. They are awakened by men who are cocksure of their ground, and who speak with authority. . . . Revival preaching must be directed towards the heart and not the head. . . . Get hold of the heart and the head yields easily."<sup>1</sup>

Against positive affirmation in preaching there is no legitimate objection from the point of view either of homiletics or of psychology, so long as the minister is affirming rational convictions, and is not merely repeating, parrot-like, the shibboleths of an outworn theology. It is the tendency of most revivalists to affirm dogmatically those doctrines that are characteristic of a reactionary theology which is to be condemned.<sup>2</sup> That the minister shall preach with conviction the faith that is in him is the desire even of those among the religious audience who do not share those convictions.<sup>3</sup> And preaching with the authority of a vital assurance of the truth and value of the Christian Gospel is one of the outstanding topics of emphasis in most works on homiletics.<sup>4</sup>

As for repetition, it is one of the "laws of recall" in the psychology of memory that "an impression, if it is not

<sup>1</sup> Torrey, R. A., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Grimshaw, op. cit., pp. 199-215.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Black, J., Mystery of Preaching, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> For especially good treatments, see Mouzon, Preaching With Authority; Buttrick, G. A., Jesus Came Preaching, Ch. I; and Vinet, Homiletics, pp. 196-208.

reinforced by repeated experiences or by repeated revivals of the image, tends to fade with the lapse of time."<sup>1</sup> Some repetition is desirable even in written discourse, especially in those forms which are didactic in purpose. Yet it is not so necessary in that which is written as in that which is oral. The reader of a book is at liberty to pause and re-read at will, thus effecting repetition for himself. But if the members of an audience fail, for any one of several reasons, to understand a statement of the speaker, or if some idea which is basic to the full understanding of succeeding ideas has faded from the memory of some of the hearers, unless the speaker repeats, those members of the audience are likely to lose a large part of his message. So that, far from being the exclusive characteristic of hypnotic crowd-oratory, repetition is a didactic technique which has its proper place in preaching, no less than in other forms of discourse. In recognition of this fact, Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, who certainly would not be classified as a crowd-orator,<sup>2</sup> has said:

"The preacher of to-day must win by other arts, one of which is the knack of 'artistic repetition', in obedience to the wisdom of 'Alice in Wonderland', where we are told, 'What I tell you three times is true'."<sup>3</sup>

Still a fourth characteristic of revival preaching and other forms of crowd-oratory is the audience-centred method of delivery. In most text-books on homiletics which treat of delivery, three methods are distinguished--reading from a manus-

<sup>1</sup> Gardner, op. cit., p. 23. Cf. also Stout, Groundwork of Psychology, pp. 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. his volume of sermons, God and the Golden Rule.

<sup>3</sup> The New Preaching, p. 117.

cript, reciting verbatim from memory, and preaching extemporaneously, with or without notes, and with or without having previously written the sermon in full.<sup>1</sup> A full discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each of these methods of delivery lies without the scope of this paper. It may be observed, however, that if any successful revivalist, or other type of crowd-orator, has used the method of reading closely from a manuscript, we have failed to discover that fact. Moreover, most of the text-books on homiletics estimate reading from a manuscript as the least effective method of delivery, and preaching extemporaneously (but not without careful preparation--either written or unwritten) as the most effective method. And it would probably be true to say that most great preachers of the past and present have delivered their sermons without manuscript, although there are many notable exceptions.<sup>2</sup>

The major point of consideration, however, is not the method itself, but whether in any of the methods employed the preaching is audience-centred and genuinely communicative. It is possible for a preacher to speak extemporaneously, but to be so introvertedly self-conscious that he looks at the ceiling, the wall, or the floor, or in some other way manifests a non-communicative attitude which gives no evidence of his consciousness of the presence of an audience or of his interest in it. Such preaching may be described as preaching before an audience,

1 Cf. Kidder, op. cit., pp. 307-328 and Appendix C., pp. 464-489; Broadus, op. cit., pp. 288-317; Van Oosterzee, op. cit., pp. 330-338; and Christlieb, Homiletic, pp. 374-379.

2 Cf. Kidder, loc. cit., for a historical and critical account of methods, and Newton, If I Had Only One Sermon to Prepare, and Pritchard, The Minister, the Method, and the Message, for accounts of methods of outstanding American and British preachers.

rather than preaching to an audience. On the other hand, it is possible for a sermon to be read from a manuscript so communicatively that the audience is scarcely aware of the presence of the manuscript and that the rapport between preacher and audience is not seriously impaired by the mechanics of reading, although Van Oosterzee has hardly exaggerated when he says that "between the reading of a sermon and the preaching of the Word, there is a distance which may be lessened indeed, but never overcome".<sup>1</sup>

From the point of view of group thinking, as we considered it in Chapter VII, it is obvious that an audience-centred method of delivery is essential in the preaching situation. And from the point of view of attention and the memory of content, experimental evidence confirms the teaching of most of the authorities on public speaking and homiletics.

"The general depression," say Murphy and Murphy, "which so often seems to sweep through the hall as the speaker draws a manuscript from his pocket is the kind of clue that led H. T. Moore to attack the question of how well one listens when one may directly watch the face of the speaker, as compared with listening while the lecturer is bent over his notes. Moore presented identical material to two very similar groups, using lecture notes when addressing one group, and speaking from memory to the other (the entire passage had been committed to memory and abundantly rehearsed). After hearing the material, the students wrote out in detail all that they could remember. There were 39 subjects in one group, 61 in the other, and no significant differences in class standing between the two. In a preliminary experiment, the 'marble statue test' had been spoken (without notes) to the larger group, and read aloud to the smaller. Since, however, both groups knew that this was a test and took definitely competitive attitudes, no differences as between the two methods appeared. In the final experiment, however, the purpose was disguised, the

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 334.



lecture material being given as part of the ordinary classroom routine. It consisted of an 184-element statement of the life of Helmholtz, taking five minutes to cover. The difference in retention under these conditions is very great, the score made by those who heard the reading being 49.6, m.v. 14.4, and for the speaking 67.5, m.v. 15.7.<sup>1</sup>

A final characteristic of revival preaching which should be noted is its emotionalism. This has been the point of its severest condemnation, and the grounds for that condemnation were sufficiently indicated in our discussion of the value of revivals. It suffices here, therefore, to note that in this case, as in the case of the other characteristics which we have considered, our thesis holds, that the techniques of the revivalist differ from those commended by recognized homiletical authorities in degree, rather than in kind.

Following Hocking's thesis that in religion feeling is basal, Principal Hughes points out most clearly the significance of feeling in religion and the psychological weakness of religion which is too exclusively a matter of feeling. In part, he says:

" . . . Although religion arises in feeling, it yet does not get its satisfaction in feeling only, but in an attainment. . . . It does not get its satisfaction until the whole personality in all the deepest ranges of its being is claimed. So it lays the reason under tribute and forces it to formulate a belief as an interpretation of the experience. It touches the springs of action and stirs the conative element to impel men to acts of worship, to prayers, and religious conduct. In this way does the unity of consciousness assert itself, for no one aspect of conscious life can function or express itself unduly without detriment to the other aspects. For religion to remain as predominantly feeling is to end in weak sen-

<sup>1</sup> Experimental Social Psychology, pp. 518-519.

timentalism or unwholesome erotic mystical experiences. To be kept healthy the religious experience, which is at bottom feeling, must find articulation in thought and be interpreted in terms of truth and reason. . . . Religion, then, can never remain mere feeling, nor can the primacy and sway of feeling obscure the other aspects of consciousness without detriment to the whole."<sup>1</sup>

Such a balanced view of the wholesome religious experience which it is the preacher's task to cultivate in the religious audience deserves to be emphasized. But if the revivalist needs to learn better the place of cognition and conation in the development of the religious consciousness, the settled pastor could often profit by recognizing the need for an emotionally warmer type of preaching than one frequently hears in the pulpits of our churches to-day.

Dr. James Reid has not put it too strongly when he says in his Warrack lectures on preaching:

"But we must not be afraid of letting ourselves go. It is an indispensable part of the revelation of truth, for truth only comes home to men through preaching in its proper emotional atmosphere. To make people feel the truth is an essential part of making them see it. If we come to the point where the truth ceases to move us in some healthy emotion, we may rightly suspect our own apprehension of it, and we will need to recover the vision, it may be, on our knees."<sup>2</sup>

That professor was not far wrong who said to some students at Glasgow,

"A PREACHER IS A MAN WITH A MESSAGE, ON FIRE."<sup>3</sup>

1 The New Psychology and Religious Experience, pp. 159-160.

2 In Quest of Reality, p. 100.

3 Black, James, The Mystery of Preaching, p. 121.

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